

Tales of Berk

by darkmickyangel

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Summary: Since his birth Hiccup has been marked by Night. His destiny awaits far from the shores of Berk. Will Hiccup be able to rise and meet his fate? Or die cursed as a monster. The first installment of the epic: Of Dragons and Leviathans

1. The Birth

A/N: **I do not own HTTYD or any of the characters in this story.**

This is a story that has been long in the making, and is planned to be a long one! so buckle in folks, it's going to be a long ride.

Special thanks to HurryPollo for editing.

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><p>Ch1: Birth<p>

It was the peak of winter, or Deadly Winter as the Berks referred to it, the time of the year when the sun didn't peak above the horizon for a week or two, due to North being so far north. When everyone huddled into their homes or the great hall, to escape the deep chill of winter. Not a good time for a baby to be born. It spoke of ill omens and curses, not to mention the birth was premature.

"Stoick, will you stop pacing?" his younger brother, Spitelout sighed, rubbing his temples, "You're making me feel antsy as well."

"Sorry, I'm just worried is all," Stoick apologized, sitting down onto one of the chairs placed around the fire pit. He picked up a block of wood and a knife, and started to carve the wood to calm his mind.

"Valhallarama is a strong, healthy woman," Gobber said, adjusting the fire with a poker, "you're being too negative if you ask me."

"Don't, we're stopping this train of conversation here" Spitelout waved his hand and shook his head-"jinxes are not something we should enact."

"I'm just stating the facts is all," Gobber complained, then sighed, "but I guess you're right." He placed the poker on its holder and stood up, "I'll make us something to eat, it'll calm the nerves."

"There's chicken in the larder, we can cook it on the spit," Stoick said appreciatively as Gobber began to pull out supplies from the larder. But most of his attention was on the door, where hopefully soon the messenger from the healer would be knocking on the door.

"It's nearly morning," Gobber commented as he prepared the meat skewers, "it only took about half a day for your wife's labor, right Spitelout?"

Stoick and Gobber turned to Spitelout, who was about say something when a knock on the door was heard.

All three men looked up, and Spitelout opened the door, letting in Martha, the healer's assistant.

"Is everything okay? Did they both make it through?" Stoick asked nervously.

"Yes," the assistant said, and the tension in the room dissipated, "congratulations Stoick, you have a son."

The room erupted into cheers, Stoick hugging the woman before reaching to grab his helmet, "Thank Thor, I'm going to- is it alright if I go see them?"

"Of course, do you two want to tag along?" the assistant asked, turning to the other two.

"And go out into that weather?" Gobber scoffed, "Nah, I'll stay right here."

"Congratulations Stoick," Spitelout said, giving his stepbrother a hug, "I'll come by tomorrow to see him, but I should be getting back to my own family, yeah?"

"Of course, I'll see you tomorrow brother, say hi to your wife for me," Stoick said, then marched out into the cold. The road was slick with ice, and the wind was strong. But the assistant and he marched through it like the Vikings they were, down the road to the medical house.

Gothi, the mute med witch, greeted them as they came through the door, waving happily.

"Gothi, good to see you," Stoick said, "where is

Valhallarama?"

Gothi waved him into a back room, where he found his wife sitting in a bed, covered in blankets.

"Stoick,"- the brunette smiled when he came in, "come here, come meet our son."

Stoick smiled, and sat next to his wife on the bed.

And she handed him his son for the first time.

He was a tiny thing, almost the size of Stoick's head, with big green eyes and a few freckles across his face.

"He's soâ€|tiny," Stoick said, a smile on his face, holding the child close to his chest.

"The elder says it is because he's premature, but I'm hoping we can turn that around."

Stoick smiled and handed his son back to his wife, "I don't care if he's tiny or not," he said, kissing his wife on her head, "I love him all the same."

Valhallarama smiled and cooed at the baby as it shifted in her arms.

"He'll grow up to be a great leader," Valhallarama said, "just like his father."

Stoick chuckled and leaned back against the head board, content and happy. He stayed there until the midwife came in and told him that Valhallarama needed rest, and that he could come back tomorrow. His wife and son stayed under Gothi's watch until Deadly Winter passed, and the second winter began.

The baby grew steadily, and remained healthy, but was still considerably small. But other than his size, he was perfectly healthy. When spring came, and they knew the child would survive, they named him Hiccup, on account of his small size. When the baby turned just over four months old, Stoick noticed something strange about his child.

The child had a birth mark, like any human would. Hiccup's in particular was a faint, dark crescent shape on the back of his shoulder, fitting since he was born at a time when Day wasn't present. However now, now the mark had grown darkerâ€|and shinier?

"Love, come here for a second will you?" Stoick said, curiously examining the mark on his child's back.

"What is it, Dear?" Valhallarama asked, walking in from the back room, folding one of Stoick's tunics.

"Hiccup's birthmark, it'sâ€| different," Stoick explained, handing over the child to his wife.

She sat down on the bench and took the child, examining his back,

"Well it certainly is," she said worriedly, stroking the dark mark,

"Stoick, thisâ€¦ this looks like a dragon scale."

"Have you ever heard of such a thing?" Stoick asked, frowning.

"No, I haven't," Valhallarama said, looking up at her husband, concerned, "Love, what if he's cursed?"

"We should take him to the elder," Stoick said, standing up, "before we jump to any conclusions. See what she says."

They took him to the elder that evening, an old woman by the name of Freda. The woman was ancient, nearly 70 years old. She was talking to Gothi, the healer and next in line to be elder, when they were welcomed into her home.

"Stoick, Valhallarama," Freda greeted, "what brings you here?"

"Our son," Valhallarama said, taking the child out of its sling, and walking forward, "his birthmark, its changed."

"Hmmm let me see him," Freda asked, and took the child into her bony hands. She turned him around and looked at the mark.

"What does it mean?" Stoick asked.

"Patience Chief," Freda said, "these things take time. Gothi, hand me those scissors."

The graying mute handed Freda the scissors, and Freda snipped a clipping of hair off the top of Hiccup's head. She handed the child back to his parents. She stood up and hobbled over to a small, elevated pit with embers inside of it. She placed the hair inside it, watched it burn, and then scrutinized the smoke it let off, "Hmm, this is not good."

"What is it?" Stoick asked, "A curse?"

"The spirits of Night have decided to make the child one of their own," Freda said.

"Because he was born when the sun doesn't rise," Stoick realized, speaking hoarsely.

"Yes, the dark scales will consume his body, altering his human shape."

"How do we remove it?" Valhallarama asked determinedly, "I'll not let my son turn into a monster."

Gothi stepped forward, shaking her head. With her own cane she wrote on the stone slab.

"I don't understand, this isn't a curse?" Valhallarama frowned, reading the lettering, she and Stoick exchanged glances, "But it sounds like one"

"Good things can come from Night, just as bad things can also come

from Day. That is why we have both of them," Freda supplied, "the Norns have given Hiccup a hard life. The kind that either destroys people, or makes heroes of the greatest kind"

"So there is no way to stop this?" Stoick asked.

"Correct, however there is a chance to slow the transformation down, so that he can grow up human," Freda said, "there is a small island just south of the Berserker Tribe's home. In it there is a small spring that glows with the sun's light during the summer equinox. The water's power might just be strong enough to prevent the spreading."

"The summer equinox is in a fortnight," Stoick frowned, "that means we would need to leave today to get him there in time."

"Stoick, take Hiccup home and pack my things," Valhallarama said steadily, handing the child to her husband, "I know what my next quest is; I'm going down to the docks to ready the ship. I'll get Hiccup there in time."

"I'm coming with you," Stoick said, "he's my son too."

"With you gone there is no one to defend the village from the dragon raids," Valhallarama said, "I will go alone, I love you Dear, I'll see you down at the docks," the brunette turned and then left.

Stoick sighed, "Aye, why did I ever marry such a spitfire?" he mumbled, and then thanked the elder and elder-to-be and returned home. He packed his wife's things, as well as Hiccup's. Hiccup gurgled happily as he chewed on his stuffed dragon, watching his father load up the boxes. Valhallarama returned quickly, and with Gobber's help, and the three of them carted the supplies down to the docks.

"Safe sailing, Love," Stoick said, as they stood on the docks.

"We'll be back," Valhallarama smiled, "don't you worry."

"And I'll be here," Stoick smiled as they exchanged the usual farewell.

He watched as the ship sailed off with the tide.

Then waited anxiously during the four weeks the trip would take, praying hard on the summer equinox that his son would be well.

Valhallarama returned early with a favorable wind, and good news. The water had washed away the traces of the change. And the sages of the island had assured her that the blessing would hold off the transformation for years.

They had held Night back from claiming their son's life.

* * *

><p>AN: Thanks for reading! this chapter is more of a prelude

than anything. this is going to be the only author's note you'll see for a while, so take note:**

Night - Norse god of the- you guessed it- night

Day - Norse god of the day

Norns - Norse god's of fate

Thor - uh... Thor. Carries around a hammer... controls the weather. haven't heard of him? well... google him.

Odin - 'All-father' big all seeing god, Thor's father.

If i missed any god's mentioned in the writtings, let me know.

2. The Reawakening

**A/N: I do not own HTTYD or any of the characters. **

**special thanks to HurryPollo for editing. **

Reviews are welcome.

It should be noted that in this universe Stoick is a little more open with Hiccup due to the concern over his condition. So Stoick may seem a little OOC, but that is due to him raising Hiccup in fear that he would lose him every day, and thus having a different relationship dynamic than in the movie. In essence they are somewhat closer than they were in the movie, but the awkwardness still stands.

* * *

><p>Ch. 2: The Reawakening<p>

"Some people lose their mug, some people lose their knife. Me, I manage to lose a whole dragon?!" Hiccup grumbled, hitting a branch in anger, only to have it swing back and hit his face.

A perfect metaphor for his life if anything.

Rubbing his eye, Hiccup looked up at the offending tree and took in its broken state. Then the trench of uprooted dirt beyond it. Excitement bubbled up inside Hiccup, it had to be. He jumped down into the trench and followed the path, the buzzing feeling in the back of his head encouraging him.

There was a small hill up ahead, Hiccup peeked his head up cautiously.

A velvet black creature lay at the bottom of the hill.

Hiccup took several steadying breaths, trying to block out the annoying buzzing in the back of his brain. He pulled out his knife and rolled over the hill, sliding behind a nearby boulder for cover.

He didn't hear any movement from the dragon, which was a good

sign.

Right?

It was hard to think with the incessant whine inside his head.

Hiccup edged around the rock, and laid eyes fully on the creature in front of him.

A black, lithe creature, more with the shape of a cat than anything else.

Well a really large cat.

With wings.

And scales.

A nightfury.

"Oh, this fixes everything!" Hiccup whispered as the realization that he had done it, hit him. He had taken down a nightfury. He had done the impossible. His dad would appreciate him, people would stop bullying him. He would be an actual Viking!

"I have brought down this mighty beast!" Hiccup cheered in a moment of hubris, placing a foot on the creature.

Who promptly groaned and shoved him off.

Hiccup, startled, scooted back, holding his knife out in front of him, turning his head to look at the creature's head.

The two pairs of green eyes connected.

The buzzing in Hiccup's head rose to a crescendo and suddenly a wall in his mind seemed to crumble under the gaze of the trapped beast.

Pain.

Fear.

They emanated from the nightfury itself.

The creature was afraid; of him.

He had caused it pain.

This was the nightfury's pain.

Hiccup had caused this.

The realization hit him full force, and made him feel sick.

He had done this.

He dropped his knife and looked down at himself, feeling out of place in his own body.

When had he become soâ€¦ _cruel_?

Hiccup asked himself, looking over the ropes trapping the creature in front of him.

Confusion flickered inside his mind, but it wasn't his, it was the nightfury's.

The creature had lifted its head back up, and was looking at him.

"I'm sorry," Hiccup said out loud, hoping that the creature understood him. He picked up the knife and started to cut through the ropes entangling the creature, talking as he did, "I didn't realize- I don't know- I'm sorry. I'm a monster for doing this to you. I hope you aren't hurt too badly."

He felt the confusion from the beast growing stronger as he cut the ropes, and when the monster rolled onto its belly, Hiccup dropped his knife and stepped back. The black monster stood up on all fours and the two regarded each other from a distance.

What are you?

The words echoed through Hiccup's head, making him shudder.

"You can speak?" Hiccup asked, taking a step forward, "Is that why I can feel your emotions?"

The black creature's eyes narrowed, and it looked past Hiccup.

A flash of sensory information ran through Hiccup's head, making him flinch, and when Hiccup opened his eyes again the dragon was flying off through the trees.

"Hiccup!" the deep voice of his father echoed in the trees behind him, and less than a second later his father, and a few men appeared at the top of the hill, looking worried.

"Hiccup, son, are you alright?" Stoick asked, skidding down the hill in a fluid movement, and coming to a stop in front of him. The man was kneeling down to be eye level with him.

"Y-yeah, I'm okay," Hiccup stuttered.

"These scales, and the tracks," one of the men said amazingly, "by Odin, he really did shoot it down."

"But these ropes were cut by a knife," the other man said, and both turned to Stoick, who turned to Hiccup.

"Son, what happened here?"

"I-I don't know," Hiccup said, and frowned, he could feel something on his face, like he had a runny nose or something. He touched his upper lip, and pulled his hand away, frowning when he saw blood on the tips of his fingers.

"We need to get him to Gothi, now," Stoick said, and picked Hiccup up

off the ground.

Hiccup wanted to complain, but he was feeling a little woozy, and it was a rather long walk back. So he let his mind numbly shut down as his father double timed it back to the village.

I don't know if you can hear me, human, or whatever you maybe. But you were kind enough to not kill me so I'll take a shot in the dark. I'm stuck and I can't get out. Help, please! I don't know if you can hear me! But I need help. If humans find me here I'm as good as dead. Please... I don't want to dieâ€|

Hiccup moaned, eyes fluttering open. His head felt like lead, and his mouth felt like cotton. His skin itched, like ants had bitten every square inch of his skin.

"I don't know, what do you think I should say?" a deep voice, that registered vaguely in the back of his mind as his father's came muffled from across the room, "No, I know I need to tell him the truth, but I don't know how to. What do you just want me to say, you've been cursed your entire life and I knew about it. Hope you can get through it? Exactly, I don't want to come off as- I know, I know you don't need to be reminding me"-there was the sound of shifting, and Stoick came into view, looking very concerned-"Hiccup, your awake, are you okay? Need anything to drink?"

"Water" Hiccup asked, voice rough from a sore throat. His father disappeared for a second then reappeared with a glass, and helped him sit up and drink it, "Thank you," Hiccup murmured, setting the glass down.

Elder Gothi walked into view, and hit Stoick on the arm, and then gestured to him, giving his father a pointed look. She then walked out of the house.

"Right, eh, Hiccup," Stoick said, adjusting himself in the chair beside the bed, "Son, we need to talk about something-concerning you, and, eh, yourself"

"O-okay?" Hiccup said, feeling a sense of foreboding in his stomach.

"Well you know that your birth happened atâ€| a unique time of the year. A time that wouldâ€| I'm sorry this is just so hard to say," Stoick sighed, lookingâ€| guilty, "Hiccup, I have been keeping something a secret from you for a long time. I hoped that we wouldn't have to tell you until you were olderâ€| but it doesn't look to be that way."

"What do you mean?"

"You were born during Deadly Winter," Stoick said, "you know this; it's never been a secret. But there is more to your birth than you know."

"I don't understand, so I was born during winter, what does that have to do with anything?"

"Because you were born at a time when Day didn't exist, Night has marked you as one of its own."

Hiccup felt panic rising in his chest at these words-"Soâ€¦ I'm not human? Is that what you are trying to say?"

"You were born human," Stoick clarified, "but from birth you have been destined to lose your humanity and turn into a monster."

"What? No. No-no-no-no. You're wrong. I'm human," Hiccup said determinedly.

"You are," Stoick said, heartbroken, "but for how longâ€¦ that is a test of your heart and your courage. When you were a babe, your mother and I found a way to counteract the transformation. But, I don't know what happened between you and that dragon in the woods today, but something triggered a change within _you. _Gothi doesn't think the transformation can be held off for much longer._" _

Hiccup made to say something, but Stoick stopped him with a gesture of his hand-"Hiccup, there is something I want you to understand."

"You may see this as a curse, but it is not. It is destiny. And if you choose to let it rule you, than you have cursed yourself, but if you rise to meet your fateâ€¦ than you may find something more than any of us hope to obtain."

"Riseâ€¦ to meet it?" Hiccup frowned, thinking the phrase over.

"Yes," Stoick said, "Freda, the elder before Gothi, was the one who told me and your mother how to prevent the transformation. She said one time that just as much good came from the night as it did from the day. You are not destined to turn into an evil monster, but into a monster of the night."

"So even though I change physically, it doesn't mean I'm going to become evilâ€¦," Hiccup thought out loud, "there is hope."

"Yes. No life is easy, or simple. That is why it is life. Those that let it ruin us are said to be cursed, and those that rise to meet it... They become heroes"-Stoick reached out and clasped his son's hand between his hands-"and know that no matter which you become, you will always be my son."

"I'm sorry about this morning, I should have believed you," Stoick said honestly, then sighed letting go of Hiccup's hand, "and as much as it pains me too, I have to head out tomorrow"

"Looking for the dragon's nest?" Hiccup asked glumly, tightening his hand into a fist on the sheets.

"It's something that needs to be done, for the village," Stoick said, and Hiccup could see the conflict in his eyes, "I wish I could stay here and help youâ€¦ but this is a path I can't help you walk. You've got to find your own way, I'm sorry. I wish I could have told you this when you were older."

"Better now than never," Hiccup quipped, smiling slightly.

"So that's the bad news," Stoick said, resting his elbows on his

knees, "now for some good news."

"What news?"-Hiccup sat up curiously

"Dragon training," Stoick announced, "you start in the morning."

"Dragon training?"-Hiccup faltered-"I don't know dad, after today I don't know if I want to see another dragon."

"After you managed to shoot down a nightfury, you're worried about normal dragons?" Stoick laughed heartily, "Sorry, it just seems ironic to me. It's something I want you to do Hiccup," he said getting serious, "so you can defend yourself, and others. You see?"

"Fine, butâ€¦ I don't expect me to be first in class or anything," Hiccup gave in, knowing that his father's mind wouldn't be changed.

"I just want you to be prepared for anything that happens in the future, I don't care so much about rank"-Stoick, leaned back in his chair-"I know you have more to deal with than dragons, speaking of which. What happened this morning? Why did you cut the dragon loose?"

"Iâ€¦ I don't really know," Hiccup admitted, "it wasâ€¦ I was there and I realized that I kinda justâ€¦ I couldn't kill it. I just didn't have the heart."

"And it didn't attack you?" Stoick asked, furrowing his brow, "That's odd."

"I think it was more afraid of me than anything else," Hiccup admitted, remembering the creature's fear, "in fact, I know soâ€¦ but I don't really know how to explain it. It must have been because of theâ€¦ eh, my nature."

"Hmmm, well I don't know what to say to that. Just be ready to be hounded about it, everyone in town wants to know."

"Well, then, I guess it's a good thing you're taking most of them with you tomorrow."

"Yeah, I guess it is," Stoick grunted, standing up, "I have to head off, oversee the preparations. Training starts early tomorrow, Gothi advised that you rest up for the remainder of the day, so take things easy; I carried some books up for you to read, as well as some water and lunch. I'll be back for dinner," Stoick said, pointing to the nightstand next to Hiccup's bed.

"Thanks, Dad," Hiccup said, "see you later."

Stoick gave a small wave, and walked down the stairs, then out the door.

Hiccup bundled himself up in his sheets, getting comfy. Contemplating the changes his life was about to face and the fate destiny had given him. He eventually just decided to take the days as they came, and lulled off to sleep.

Human? I don't know if you can hear meâ€|

3. The Weapon

****A/N: I do not own HTTYD or any of the characters.****

****Special thanks to HurryPollo for editing.****

****Reviews are appreciated.****

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><p>Ch. 3: The Weapon<p>

"Okay, the truth is that I don't think I'll be able to swing this, much less hit anything with this," Hiccup grunted, lifting the heavy axe onto his shoulder.

His father and he had just finished dinner, and were discussing weapons for training tomorrow, it was traditional that the trainee train with a family weapon, but finding one that suited Hiccup was turning out to be a problem.

"That's the lightest axe we have," Stoick sighed, "and you can't go fighting with a knife, that's unhealthy, not to mention frowned upon."*

"Well, I don't have the strength to wield a hammer, and I'm too short to be a spearman," Hiccup sighed, "I guess I'll just deal with this one and make something lighter at the forge?"

"But family weapons are traditional," Stoick insisted, looking at the weapons hung on the walls, "there must be something here that will suit you."

Stoick paused, looking at Hiccup, and stroking his beard-"I think I know what you need"-he walked into the back storage room.

"A growth spurt?" Hiccup supplied sarcastically, "and maybe ten pounds?"

Stoick's laughter rung from the back room, and he walked out with a bundle of cloth-"Here you go, let's see if this works."

Hiccup traded the axe for the bundled cloth, and began to unwrap it.

Inside the swath was a burgundy sheath, for a one handed sword.

"No," Hiccup said, immediately dropping the weapon on the bench like it was on fire, "No, I'll use the axe."

"You said you needed a lighter weapon," Stoick said, taking the sword and holding it out to his son, "it was your mothers."

"It's a _sword,_ Dad," Hiccup argued, "They're for killing people, not dragons. Not to mention what the others will think."**

"In the right hands, it could kill a dragon."

"The others will kill me," Hiccup argued, "they'll think I'm declaring myself the leader andâ€¦"

"You are the chief's son!" Stoick declared.

"You are a leader! It is wisdom, and the ability to do what is right for the whole that makes a leader, not just strength! Even if you may not become chief due to your curseâ€¦ you will be a leader that men will follow because it is in your blood, as well as your nature.

"Are you going to let others control you? Or make your own path?"

Stoick presented Hiccup with the blade again, and Hiccup took the blade from him gently.

"You're going to use that saying a lot now, aren't you."

Stoick smiled down at his son, "I like the presence it gives, it's quite cryptic."

"Don't you have a fleet to lead?"

"That I do," Stoick said, lifting up his basket of clothes, "train hard, I'll be back, probably."

"And I'll be here, maybe."

* * *

><p>*Most Vikings carried a knife at their belt, used specifically for eating. It was frowned upon to use this knife for fighting, so much that there were said to be afterlife consequences for killing people with it.<p>

**Swords actually had a negative connotation in Viking lore, sure they were a symbol of status and leadership, but they had a negative stigma associated with them, as their only use was for killing, while a hammer or an axe had other purposes. Hiccup is afraid of bringing more attention to himself, and singling himself out as a leader.

4. Gronkle Wrangling

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Special thanks to HurryPollo for editing.

Reviews are appreciated.

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><p>Ch. 4: Gronckle Wrangling<p>

Hiccup left his house late on purpose that day, hopping to get to the

arena after everyone had arrived. He hopped to blend into the background and not bring any attention to himself. But that was not destined to be. Word of him actually surviving an encounter with the nightfury has spread like wildfire.

Fishlegs was waiting for him when he opened the door.

"What did it look like?" the blond demanded immediately, "Come on Hiccup you have to tell me."

"What-"

"The nightfury! You saw it didn't you?!" the boy said, nearly tripping over himself as they began to walk down the steps to the road, "I bet it's huge! And maybe can shape shift or something."

"I don't know about shape shifting," Hiccup said nervously, this had been the last thing that he had wanted, "but it's actually pretty small."

"Like terrible terror small?"

"No, bigger. Listen I don't really want to talk about it right now. I'll give you a full in depth later?"

"You will, thanks, Hiccup!" Fishlegs squealed, "You know this is one for the history books. No one- and I mean no one. Has ever seen one and lived. How did you even manage to get away?"

"It probably didn't even register him as a threat," Snotlout's voice came from behind them, followed by the laughter of the twins.

"Yeah, probably thought he was a twig or something," Tuffnut chortled, and he and Snotlout shared a high five.

Hiccup squared his shoulders in false hubris, remembering the sequence of events that he was going to tell people, versus the actual truth, "For your information, I let it go."

"You let it go?" Astrid asked, from off to the side, she sounded pissed, "You had the perfect chance to take that beast-"

"Because a creature like that doesn't deserve to die captured and bound," Hiccup said, daring to cut her off, this seemed to shock the others as they all froze, "it deserves to die in battle as a warrior. If I had killed it and taken the glory it would have been the coward's way out."

Hiccup left it at that, turning and heading off into the direction of the arena, before anyone could see through his bluff and call him out on it. He tried not to run, but walk calmly to the arena, knowing that everyone was right behind him.

"Welcome to dragon training!" Gobber said cheerfully, opening the gate to the arena and letting the teens in.

Hiccup ignored their morbid fascination with pain, instead staring at the cages, and listening to the much more interesting conversation the dragons were having.

_I'm betting at least two wet their pants. _A voice, female said from the far right door.

_We'll take that bet. _Two voices, speaking at the same time replied in unison.

_Who's going to go first? _A deep voice from the Monstrous Nightmare's cage.

_Me, probably. _Another female, this one deeper

_Man you always get to go first! _This one sounded like a child, Hiccup couldn't tell if it was a boy or a girl.

_Hush up this is the best part! _The first dragon hissed, and they all fell silent in anticipation.

Hiccup snapped his attention back to Gobber, "-and the Gronckle."

"Whoa, whoa, aren't you going to teach us first?" Snotlout asked, stepping forward.

"I believe in learning on the job," Gobber smiled evilly, and pulled the lever.

With a bang and cheers of good luck from the other dragons, the Gronckle rocketed out of its cage, strait across the area strait into the other side.

Hiccup blocked out the dragons, and instead focused on what Gobber was saying.

"Quick, what's the first thing you're going to need?"

"A doctor?" Hiccup asked, his voice cracking a little.

"Plus five speed?"

"A shield!" Astrid called, scooping down to pick up one of the many on the ground.

Hiccup did the same, picking it up easily as Gobber rattled off the importance of it.

_Squabbling on the battle field is not productive. _The Gronckle said airily, the deeper of the two voices.

Hiccup frowned and looked over at the dragon just in time to see it blast the shield the twins were squabbling over out from between their hands.

"Ruff, Tuff you're out," Gobber announced, "those shields are good for another thing: noise. Make lots of noise to throw off a dragons aim."

The other teens started slamming their weapons on their shields. Hiccup started slamming his fist on the back of his shield with his free hand. He didn't have any experience with a sword; he feared he would be more likely to injure himself than do any good by drawing

the sharp blade.

He caught sight of a weapons rack, and slid behind it for cover.

"All dragons have a limited number of shots, how many does a Gronckle have?"

"Five?"

"No six!" Fishlegs supplied happily.

Don't turn your back to you opponent!

The Gronckle shouted, over Gobber, and then promptly blasted Fishlegs' shield out of his hand. The blast landed right beside the weapons holder Hiccup was hiding behind-"Fishlegs, out. Hiccup, get in there!"

Hiccup grimaced, and stepped out into the ring again. Snotlout talking caught his attention, and he noticed that Astrid was standing right in front of him, watching the Gronckle closely.

The Gronckle sent a shot their way, and Astrid jumped out of the way just in time, and Snotlout got hit. She came to a stop in front of him.

"Did you just do that on purpose?" Hiccup asked the blonde in disbelief.

"What?" she asked partially over her shoulder.

Immediately he put up his own shield and took a step to the side, only to have Astrid shuffle, keeping herself between him and the dragon.

"Stop it, Astrid."

"Stop what?" she asked Hiccup "It's better this way, right?"

_Oh this is just too easy. _The Gronckle said, watching the two humans interact.

Realizing the dragon was going to do something, Hiccup jumped to the side, just as without warning the Gronckle charged strait into Astrid, knocking her axe and shield out of the way. The dragon pinned her to the wall and opened its mouth, charging a blast.

"Astrid!" Gobber yelled, stepping forward.

Hiccup reacted without thinking. He grabbed one of the dragon's ears, and twisted. Pain flared up in Hiccup's mind, but he gritted his teeth through it and drug the dragon away from Astrid. Much like a child being pulled by the ear by their mother, the dragon followed.

"Away with you!" he said, letting the dragon go, standing between his tribe member and the dragon, shield raised.

The dragon raised its haunches and growled. But Hiccup could feel

that there was no anger behind it, the dragon was acting tough, it knew the game was over.

"That's enough of you!" Gobber said, grabbing the dragon by the bottom lip with his metal hand. He dragged it off to its cage-"Go back, to bed you overgrown sausage. Don't you worry, you'll get another chance."

A deep rumble of laughter came from the cage, _I like this group of children. The most interesting we've had in years. _

"Standing in a line is not the wisest thing you can do," Gobber advised as Astrid stood up, "it's that right there is how you get yourself harmed by another's weapon. If you're going to form a defensive wall, stand next to each other, not behind one another."

"Little miss perfect got told," Tuffnut teased, and Astrid shoved him to the ground.

"Righty then, I expect you all to be in the great hall at sundown. Till then you are free to go," Gobber said, and the teens started to walk out.

"You did a great job there in the end, Hiccup," Gobber said, walking forward, "why didn't you draw your sword though?"

"I don't really know how to use it," Hiccup admitted, "probably would have just hurt myself."

"Ah, Stoick insisted? I see," Gobber said, as they walked out of the arena "I'll see if I can find you someone to teach you the proper use of that blade. But for today why don't you just get the feel for the weight? Go get some practice? You can't fight with a shield alone."

"I'll do that." Hiccup said, "Did you really have to call Astrid out like that?"

"If I don't tell her she's doing something wrong, how can she learn?" Gobber said, "I've got to go to work now, you go practice now. I'll see you at the forge later."

The two separated and went their separate ways, Gobber to the town and Hiccup toward the forest.

He needed to sit down and think, and he knew Fishlegs would be looking for him in town. He sighed, and made his way through the woods, ending up eventually at the crash site.

"I wish I hadn't shot it down," Hiccup murmured, picking up one of the stone balls and weighing it in his hands, "I wouldn't have to be dealing with this curse, and I wouldn't be having to avoid people" more than usual anyway."

Hiccup sighed and dropped the ball to the ground, and drew his sword slowly. The blade was sharp, and glinted in the afternoon sunlight. Hiccup took a deep breath and moved it around experimentally. The blade was well balanced, easy to control, and light. His father had been right when he said that it would suit him better than an axe.

Hiccup could see the craftsmanship that went into making it, it wasn't just one of Gobber's rough duplicates for dragon fighting emergencies, blades that were made to be disposable and remade easily. This blade was made to last, to kill for generations.

Hiccup remembered when he was younger, and his parents had taken him to the Berserker Tribe's island for the treaty signing.

The trip had been miserable, seeing as he was forced to follow Dagur everywhere. Hanging out with him had been Hel, but every morning the older boy would drag Hiccup out of bed before dawn, and take him to the training fields.

The berserkers weren't like Berk.

They didn't just fight to defend their land, they were conquerors.

They had a military.

The archers would be diligently perfecting their aim, the spearmen charging and holding mock battlements.

And the sword masters would duel each other.

The wicked metal clanging together in the dawn.

Dagur and he would watch them for hours, the blades flashing back and forth.

Hiccup recalled those moments, and slowly tried to reenact some of the motions the beginners would make, the drills the sergeants would make them go through. He felt foolish doing this; he knew he probably looked silly. But it was something he knew he had to do.

He needed to learn this.

_Odin, fucking, damn it! _The voice shot through his head, startling Hiccup and making him drop the blade, thankfully not on his foot.

The profanities continued for a short while then ended, and Hiccup looked in the direction they had come from, eyes widening.

That was the night fury's voice.

Hiccup picked up the sword, wiped the dirt off on his pants, and sheathed it carefully.

He headed forward cautiously, toward the source of the voice.

He slid down a path carved into the rock by rain, and found a small cove with a waterfall.

He could sense the dragon's presence, but couldn't see him.

Black scales littering the ground around his feet caught his attention, and he bent to pick it up.

With a roar the black dragon jumped up, clawing desperately on at the

rock ledges.

_Come on you-damn! _

The dragon lost his footing on the rock wall, and flew down to ground on the other side of the lake. Then launched himself back up.

Come on! You can do this!

Hiccup pulled out his journal quickly, without thinking, and drew a quick sketch of the dragon.

"Why don't you just fly away?" Hiccup murmured, then corrected his picture.

The dragon fired a shot of fire at the rock wall in frustration, then laid down.

Hiccup could feel the resignation beginning to sink into the dragon.

It was also tired, and hungry.

Hiccup frowned in contemplation, and panicked when he his pencil slipped out of his grip and clattered down the rock face.

The dragon rose his head up, and two made eye contact.

_You! _The dragon's voice echoed in his head, and he jumped up to his feet excitedly, Hiccup could feel hope rising in its chest _Thank Odin! I was starting to think you hearing me yesterday was a fluke! _The dragon said, jumping over to this side of the lake.

"Eh, yeah I guess not?" Hiccup said, "But I didn't hear you until just now, I was walking byâ€¦"

_Oh, then I guess your range of hearing isn't that large, but no matter, you're here now! _

"You were calling for me?" Hiccup asked, confused, looking down at the dragon.

_Yeah all night, but that doesn't matter now, let's focus on the present. _The dragon said, jumping up on a rock, _I'm stuck down here; can you help me get out?_

"You can't just fly out?"

_That contraption you knocked me down with hurt my tail. _The dragon said, and flapped the single tail fin for emphasis. _I can't._

"Oh, I'm sorry," Hiccup said, not really sure what to say. How did one ask for forgiveness for chopping off a tail?

_It fine, I'm still alive, right? _The dragon said, _What matters is that I get out of here before someone else finds me; I'm a sitting duck down here. No hard feelings if you help me out?_

"Okay. Uh, just give me a second," Hiccup said, examining the walls of the cove. Now that he looked he could see claw marks along nearly

the entire outer rim. The trees also had claw marks on them, as if the dragon had tried to climb out.

He looked behind him at the gap between the cliff faces, and saw that it was too small for the dragon to get through, even if he could make it up to the ledge.

An idea came to him.

"How high can you get? Where's the closest you've gotten to the edge?" Hiccup asked, standing up.

_Over there, I climbed the tree partially, but I couldn't make it. _The dragon said, indicating to where a large tree root hung down the side of the wall. _The tree's unstable; I almost knocked it down with my weight._

"Alright, I'm going to go get a fishing net," Hiccup said, "if I throw it over the wall, could you climb up that?"

Couldn't hurt to try.

"I'll be right back. Stay hidden," Hiccup said, and climbed back up out of the cove, jogging steadily toward the town.

5. Wall Climbing

A/N: I do not own HTTYD or any of the characters.

Special thanks to HurryPollo for editing.

Reviews are appreciated.

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><p>Ch. 5: Wall Climbing<p>

By the time he had reached his house he was out of breath and sweating heavily, "I hope lugging this sword around counts as training, Gobber," Hiccup muttered, opening container after container in their storage room. He finally found the large fishing net his Dad and he used when ocean fishing, and pulled it out, dumping it in a basket, "Right, there's that," Hiccup muttered, "and we'll need these," he muttered again, adding a jar of large nails to the mix.

"Now, foodâ€¦," Hiccup muttered, opening up the larder, frowning. They didn't have any fish, and if he went down to the docks he would most likely run into Fishlegs and be delayed.

"Hope he likes chicken then," Hiccup sighed, pulling several of the dead fowl out and adding it to his basket. He hefted the full basket onto his back and took a deep breath.

The trek back was longer, as Hiccup was now carrying his weight in rope. He made it back to the cove just before noon.

_I was starting to think you weren't going to come back. _The nightfury said, as Hiccup appeared along the rim.

"Hey, it's a long walk, give me some slack," Hiccup said, unloading his basket, "we didn't have any fish, I hope you like chicken."

You mean those bird things that you keep for laying eggs?

"Yup," Hiccup said, pulling the meat out, "I'm going to toss it down, ready?"

Yeah.

Hiccup tossed down the three birds he brought with him one at a time, the nightfury catching each easily.

Thanks.

"No problem," Hiccup said, starting to roll the fishing net out along the rim, "now let's get you out of there."

You're a strange human, you know that?

"How so?" Hiccup asked, making sure the net was securely nailed to the ground.

You shot me down, but spared my life. Then you help me. Most humans wouldn't do that. It's confusing.

"It's not that confusing," Hiccup admitted, "I wanted to kill you to prove myself. But when I finally shot you down well I was a coward. I'm not just going to walk away from this-that would make me even more of a coward."

That's not cowardice, it's called compassion. Not many humans in these parts have it. You have my thanks.

Hiccup paused; wanting to say that the dragon was wrong, but decided not to since he could feel the sincerity from the dragon, "You're welcome."

"So," Hiccup said after a pause, "I'm Hiccup, what's your name?"

Name? What's a name?

"It's what you call yourself, you know how people- eh, other dragons, identify you."

You mean smell?

"No, like a sound. Like my name's Hiccup. When people say Hiccup they are talking about me-" _And usually not in a good way. _Hiccup added silently.

Oh, we don't have those. We just identify by our senses. Like this is me, my thoughts sound like this, and no one else's does. Everyone just has their own feel to them, you know?

"That's a little confusing."

_Your names sound confusing, but I guess it's a difference of

cultureâ€| Heyâ€| how can you hear me? Most humans can't._

"Oh, well, I guess you could say it's because I'm cursed," Hiccup said nervously, "well it's not a curse, more of a destiny."

Ah, the Norns have given you a hard line to walk?

"Yeah," Hiccup grunted, making sure the net was going to hold by tugging on it, "at some point I'm going to transform into something inhuman. All because of when I was born. So while I appear human, I won't be one forever."

What kind of monster? Because I've met some of the creatures you humans call monsters, and some of them aren't all that badâ€|

"One that can speak to dragons, I guess?" Hiccup shrugged, then stood up "it's all new to me. You were the first dragon I ever really heard 'speak.'

"Right, I'm going to roll this net over the edge, see if you can use it to climb up."

Hiccup pushed on the bundle, unrolling the net over the edge, it going a fourth of the way down. The dragon backed up, and got a running start, and launched itself into the air. He hit the wall, and scrambled upward to where the net was, grabbing on.

The net held steady, and the dragon was able to pull itself up halfway. Just when it looked like the dragon would make it, the net tore right down the middle.

The dragon tried to scramble up, but couldn't make it; he slid back down into the cove.

"Well, that happened," Hiccup grumbled looking down at the ruined net, "you okay?"

_Yeah, I'm fine. _The dragon sighed. _Any other ideas?_

"None that I have the means to do today," Hiccup said sadly, "I don't have time to make another trip back to town and come back, people will notice if I'm gone too long, and they might come looking for me."

I understand, you get going then, I'll see you tomorrow?

"I'll try to bring you fish," Hiccup said, "see you then."

6. Pictures

A/N: I do not own HTTYD or any of the characters.

Special thanks to HurryPollo for editing.

Reviews are appreciated.

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><p>Ch. 6: Pictures<p>

"She's right you have to be hard on yourself!" Gobber said, as Hiccup approached the table, soaking wet from his walk back in the rain.

"Where did Hiccup go wrong?"

"Uh, He showed up?" Ruffnut offered.

"He didn't kill the nightfury," Tuffnut chided.

Hiccup ignored the jibes and picked up a plate and a cup, moving to the next table over.

"He's never where he should be," Astrid said, and Hiccup felt his hands curl into fists.

"Thank you, Astrid," Gobber said, knocking the twin's heads as he walked past them, "you need to live and breathe this stuff," He produced a book out of his back pocket-"The Dragon Manual."

"Everything we know about every dragon we know of," He said, tossing it onto the table. Thunder clapped outside the hall, Gobber looked up speculatively, "No attacks tonight, study up."

As expected there were complaints and denial of a need to study. The teens left the table in a group. Hiccup saw his moment, and approached the table.

"Can we talk about something?" Hiccup asked.

"Sure, what is it?" Astrid asked looking up.

Hiccup paused taking a deep breath, and just said what was on his mind, "Today, in the ring, were you trying to get Snotlout and me out by standing in front of us?"

"What?!" Astrid asked, slamming down her cup, offense written all over her face.

"I'll take that as a no then," Hiccup said, glad that he had been wrong, "I'm sorry I thought badly of you."

"You better be," Astrid said angrily, "don't get me wrong, I do want to come out best in training, but I would never stoop to that level."

"I just had to make sure," Hiccup said, he pulled The Dragon Manual closer to himself, "do you need to read this?"

"I've read it," she said, standing up and walking away.

Hiccup sighed, and walked back to his seat, sitting down heavily.

"Hiccup Haddock" Hiccup looked up to see one of the villagers, Betty the Blade, approaching the table, "not having a good day, eh?"

"In some ways, yeah," Hiccup said, sitting up, "how are you

doing?"

"Good, things are going well," Betty said, "Gobber says you need some instruction on how to wield a sword? He asked me to teach you. We'll start practice right after you get out of training tomorrow. Hope tomorrow turns out to be better for you, have a good night," she said as stiff as ever, then walked out of the hall.

"Yeah, youâ€¦ too," Hiccup blinked watching the tall woman leave, surprised. Betty was one of the best sword fighters on the island, and she was going to teach him? That was a surprise he never saw coming. Hiccup picked up his drink and smiled, he had to think of a way to repay Gobber for the favor.

Hiccup finished his dinner as quickly as possible, and then turned his attention to The Dragon Manual, flipping through the different types of dragons. He thought of the dragons he had heard talking, and wondered if the 'extremely dangerous' labels were completely necessary.

He paused when he got to the page he was really interested in.

Nightfury

"The unholy offspring of lightning and death itself," Hiccup read out loud, and opened his own journal, to the image he had drawn earlier that day.

He placed the image on top of the book and sighed.

"Is that what I think it is?"

Hiccup nearly jumped out of his skin at Fishlegs' voice.

"Fishlegs, what are you doing up so late?"

"Looking for you of course! So is this it? The infamous nightfury?" he asked, looking at Hiccup's crude drawing with awe.

"Yeah," Hiccup said, handing the book over to him.

"Wow," the boy said, sitting down on the bench and examining the picture, "what color was he?"

"Black, and his eyes are green," Hiccup said, recalling the dragon, "like a cat's eye."

"That must be why he's so hard to spot, its camouflage," Fishlegs mused, way too excited about this for Hiccup's mood, "hey, you think he's nocturnal? Like a bat or something?"

"Maybe," Hiccup said, and felt his gut drop a little.

If the nightfury was a creature of the night that would explain why his curse suddenly kick started again.

Hiccup mulled this over while Fishlegs examined the picture more, "One fin on the tail? Wonder what the purpose of that is?"

"Oh no, it has it on both sides, I kindaâ€¦| accidentally rubbed that out," Hiccup muttered, scratching the back of his neck.

"So what happened? I want the full details."

"Not much to say, I tracked where it fell, and I was going to kill it, but thenâ€¦| decided not to," Hiccup said, sticking to his precious story, "it didn't feel right to kill it like that, you know?"

"Yeah, I think I can, wonder what it eatsâ€¦| it never picks anything up from the village."

"Fish, he eats fish," Hiccup supplied, staring down at the pages of the dragon book on the table.

"How do you know that?" Fishlegs asked, looking at him questioningly.

"Smell," Hiccup coughed quickly, not meeting Fishlegs' eyes, "i-it smelled like fish. Soâ€¦| it might eat them?"

"That makes sense," Fishlegs said, not even catching onto Hiccup's odd behavior. He put down Hiccup's journal-"It's weird, you know? All these years and you're the first one to ever see it and live. It's almost like fate, you know?"

Hiccup tensed up, "What do you mean?"

"Heir to the tribe," Fishlegs said, waving his arm dramatically, setting the scene for a play in his mind, "captures legendary demon dragon at young age, but lets it go in an act of valor. The dragon returns for revenge, and the two fight fearlessly against each other on and off until, finally. One is victorious!" he ended, clenching his fist into the air dramatically. He caught Hiccup's blank look out of the corner of his eye-"Of course you win," he chuckled nervously.

"Thatâ€¦| sounds like a really good story," Hiccup lied awkwardly, "but I... I don't think it will come back for revengeâ€¦| I don't know why. It's just one of those feelings."

"Well it is just a story," Fishlegs shrugged, standing up, "thanks for telling me about it though, if you draw any more pictures, let me see them okay?"

"Yeah, sure, have a good night Fishlegs."

"See you at training tomorrow."

7. Nadder Dodging and Freedom

****A/N: I do not own HTTYD or any of the characters.****

****Special thanks to HurryPollo for editing.****

****Reviews are appreciated.****

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><p>Ch. 7: Nadder Dodging and Freedom<p>

"So you don't think the pulley would hold?" Hiccup asked, looking up from the arena floor to Gobber, who was leaning up against the railing above him.

He heard the Nadder approaching, and walked off to his left to avoid being found.

Gobber had set up a maze in the ring, to teach the trainees to be aware of their surroundings while in combat. The other students seemed to be floundering, with the random attacks from the Nadder.

But Hiccup, with his extra sense was just avoiding the dragon while talking to Gobber. It helped that the dragon couldn't seem to be quiet. It was always humming or commenting on the trainees' behavior.

Gobber just assumed he was working on another one of his projects, but Hiccup was really just looking for a way to get the nightfury out of that pit. Specifically, he was trying to figure out a way to use pulleys and the loose tree the dragon had told him about to lift the dragon out of the pit.

"Focus, Hiccup! You're not even trying!" Gobber said indignantly as Hiccup successfully avoided another encounter with the dragon.

"Today is all about attack!" Gobber said to the trainees in general, "Nadder's are quick, and light on their feet. Your job is to be quicker and lighter."

Hiccup heard Fishlegs yelp in surprise from nearby in the maze, followed by the Nadder's, the other female dragon, laugh.

"I'm really beginning to question your teaching methods!" Fishlegs yelled.

"Look for its blind spot, every dragon has one, find it, hide in it, and strike."

You forgot to strike! The Nadder said cheerily, and Hiccup heard the twins yelling and running away from the dragon.

"So, so how would I get the pulley to hold?" Hiccup asked, stopping below the man.

"You need to anchor it into something more solid than dirt, now get in there!" the mustached man chided, pointing to the maze behind him.

"Hiccup," someone whispered to his right, and Hiccup turned to see Astrid and Snotlout kneeling by a corner. The blonde gestured for him to get down.

He registered the Nadder's humming from just around the corner, and shook his head, indicated that they should follow him, and turned and walked the other way, trying to recall if there were any trees near

the edge of the cove that he could drill into.

"Do you think a tree would do? If I drill into it?" he asked Gobber, ignoring the people running past him.

"Hiccup!" Gobber exclaimed, exasperated, throwing his hand out.

He turned just in time to see Astrid falling toward him. He raised his shield and managed to block her axe, but the two fell to the ground.

Hiccup registered the twins making cat calls, but Hiccup ignored them, he looked off to the side to see the Nadder getting up. The pain from the Nadder's head making him dizzy-"Ugh"

He felt Astrid push him down on his chest as she got up, knocking the breath out of him.

She saw the Nadder approaching them, and twisted her shield and axe off of his arm, then hitting the dragon in the face, shattering the shield.

Hiccup hissed at both the pain in his arm and the Nadder's. It hurt.

"Is this some kind of a joke to you?!" Astrid asked, and Hiccup looked up through the pain to find her glaring at him.

"Our parent's war is about to become our own. Figure out what side you're on," she said, pointing her axe in his face. She turned and then left.

Hiccup sat up slowly, the statement striking him.

Which side of the war was he on?

Sure he was human now, and cared about his tribe.

But would any of this matter when his body changed?

Would he even remember these people?

Hiccup felt his hands tremble at the thought.

What if he ended up killing these people?

"Hiccup? Something wrong?_" Betty asked, walking up to him, the stern woman looked concerned.

"It's nothing," Hiccup said, lifting himself up off the ground.

"Right, come on, let's go," Betty said, obviously defaulting to the 'walk it off' attitude Berk warriors were known for. The two walked out of the arena, and to the training grounds.

Betty taught him the basic stances for sword fighting, and a few basic movements, and instructed him to go over them every day, until they were instinct. Even though they merely did stances and basic movements, by noon Hiccup's arms and legs were sore, too sore to make

the trek to the cove and back in time for work at the smithy.

He silently apologized to the nightfury as he walked off the training field.

"Rough training, eh?" Gobber said, as Hiccup dragged himself into the shop.

"Why do I have to be so weak?" Hiccup asked, leaning his sword up against the wall and putting on his apron.

"Oh, this again." Gobber rolled his eyes, picking up a heated blade from the fire.

"It was just basic movements, nothing strenuous and I'm exhausted!" Hiccup complained, throwing his arms out.

"It's because you're working muscles in ways they've never been used before," Gobber said, adding under his breath, "you have enough energy to complain though," He hammered the metal he was working with, "You'll bulk up a bit eventually."

"Like I was supposed to doing this job?" Hiccup said, throwing his hands up in the air, "Because that worked out well," he scoffed sarcastically.

"You're here to learn, not bulk up," Gobber chided, pointing with his hammer arm, "it's your mother's genes. She was as thin as a twig too, then she hit puberty and bulked up, you just have to be patient."

"It seems that's all I can do these days," Hiccup sighed, pulling on his gloves and getting to work.

"So what's this project you've been hounding me all day about?" Gobber asked.

"It's hard to explain, but essentially I need to lift something up a wall," Hiccup said, "I have a weight that I can drop to counter act it, but I don't think there's a place to put a pulley."

"How big of a scale are we talking?" Gobber paused in his work.

"Notâ€¦ anything big."

"Hiccup, if you're launching things againâ€¦"

"I'm not."

"You know what your father said," Gobber said, shaking his finger, "after the yak incident-"

"I'm not launching anything!" Hiccup insisted, and Gobber frowned looking at him suspiciously.

"I'm putting my foot down," Gobber said, "no more of this business. Find a different project. It's gonna end badly, I just know it."

"But -"

"No," Gobber said, glaring at him, and then turned back to his work, "if I find one pulley missing, you're losing a hand, got it?"

Hiccup sighed resignedly, and began to tidy up the shop.

So much for plan B.

The two worked steadily, until dusk came, and then they made their way up to the watch tower for evening dragon training. They started up a fire pit, and eventually got around to telling stories. Hiccup wasn't really listening, until Snotlout's outburst caught his attention.

"I swear I'm so angry right now!" the black haired teen growled at his chicken, "I'll avenge your beautiful hand and your beautiful foot. I'll chop off the legs of every dragon I fight. With my face."

"Nah, it's the tails and the wings you really want," Gobber said, emphasizing his point by pulling the wing bone off of his chicken, "if it can't fly, it can't get away. A downed dragon is a dead dragon."

Hiccup's eyes widened, an idea coming to his head.

It was crazy.

But it would work.

Hiccup stood up and left the hut, walking down the stairs quickly.

Blueprints forming in his brain.

He worked all night, in the forge.

Hammering away at the iron rods and making sure they were perfectly balanced. When the dawn came up in the morning, Hiccup was holding the world's first artificial dragon limb in his hands. He had dragon training in a few hours, but Hiccup felt that this was more important than training. He grabbed a whole basket of fish from the food storage, and ran into the forest before the morning watch was on duty.

_Where were you yesterday?! _The dragon called, as Hiccup entered the cove.

"Sorry, I got held up yesterday," Hiccup said, out of breath from carrying the basket, his muscles sore, "but I got great news, I know how to get you out of here, and get you up into the air again!"

_You're crazy, how much sleep did you get last night? You have bags under your eyes! _

"I'm not that crazy," Hiccup said, as he landed on the dirt floor of the cove. He set down the basket, and held up the product of his night's work.

The dragon looked at the device, curiously.

Hiccup smiled, and then opened it wide, presenting the final shape to the dragon.

_That- THAT'S A TAIL FIN! _The dragon cheered excitedly.

"Yeah!" Hiccup said, picking up on the dragon's enthusiasm. He smiled, "Yeah, my mentor gave me the idea, he's got an artificial leg and arm as well, so I thought, why not just give you one?"

_This is so exciting! I'm going to fly again! _The dragon said, jumping around happily. _Come on, put it on!_

"You need to stay still for me to do that," Hiccup laughed, as the dragon jumped around like a little kid, "here, eat your fish and I'll put it on," Hiccup said, kicking over the basket of fish.

The dragon moved to sift through the pile, but started hissing.

What the hell is that thing doing in here?!

"Whoa, whoa, calm down," Hiccup said, stepping forward. He saw the black and yellow striped eel mixed in with the fish, "are you talking about the eel?" Hiccup asked, holding it up.

Don't touch it! It's poison! What the hell are you doing?! What if it bites you?!

"One, it's dead. Two, It's not poisonous to me, I'm not a dragon," Hiccup said, rolling his eyes, he tossed the dead sea snake off to the side, "there, better?"

The dragon narrowed his eyes at him, and then shook his whole body like one big cat before starting to eat. Hiccup smirked at the gesture, and carried the tail fin over to the end of the dragon's body.

He placed the artificial limb down, and reached for the dragon's tale, bringing the two together.

_Is it on? _The dragon asked, shifting to turn around, thus moving his tail.

"No. Stop moving. Eat your fish." Hiccup said, grabbing the belts for the tail. He buckled the limb to the tail, and then examined it, opening the mechanism.

"There," he said, smiling to himself, happy at how close the artificial tail looked to the real one.

_All done? _The dragon asked, and Hiccup could feel the anticipation inside him.

"Alright, you're free to go, let's see what happens." Hiccup said, stepping back.

The dragon shifted, adjusting its stance, then unfurled his wings to

their greatest extent.

The nightfury took off with a powerful beat of his wings, shooting forward faster than Hiccup thought possible. But the artificial wing didn't stay open, closing due to the wind.

The dragon let out a frustrated yell as he fell down into the water.

_It didn't work! _He said, surfacing, and looked over at him, _I don't understandâ€|_

"It didn't stay open, damn it all. Why didn't I think of that? Come here, let me look at it," Hiccup said tiredly, rubbing his neck. The dragon swam to the water's edge, and dragged himself out of the water. He sat down on his haunches, and put his tail in front of him.

Hiccup approached and looked at the tail, "I'll need to find some way to keep it open during flight."

Hiccup frowned, looking at the tail, "This is going to be hard," he said, pulling out his notebook, he started to sketch out ideas on ways to keep the tail open in flight.

But you can you fix it?

"I think so, but it's going to take time, do you adjust your tail during flight? Or does it just stay flat?"

_It needs to be able to adjust. Like this. _He said, demonstrating by flapping the living fin up and down, _It lets me turn without changing my body angle, as well as turn sharply._

"Yeah, this is going to take a while then," Hiccup said, writing down notes. Maybe if he had the mechanism adjust to the angle of the other tail fin?

Wow, your mind works so differently from ours.

"What?" Hiccup asked, looking up from his work.

_Never mind, it wasn't anything important. _

"This isn't good," Hiccup admitted after a while, rubbing the bridge of his nose, "I could get this to work butâ€| it would take-months to build the mechanism, and even then you would still have to come in so I could oil it."

That's too much time to be stuck down in a hole, and too much work for the future. What happens if it breaks?

"Yeah I know," Hiccup bit his lip, thinking, "I'll keep this in mind for later though, and maybe I can do something with it. Looks like we'll have to figure out another way to get you out of this holeâ€|"

_Wellâ€| _The dragon shifted, and he could feel uncertainty coming off the dragon, _I don't think the idea of my flying out is too bad. I mean_ _why not cut out the self-adjusting mechanism

completely?_

"Then what's going to change the tail angle in mid-flight?"

â€|_You could._

"Wait, as in I ride you?"

â€|_Yeah._ _Do you think it's doable?_

"Certainly. But-you won't be able to fly freelyâ€|," Hiccup said, "Are you okay with that?"

Well I'm not exactly ecstatic about it, butâ€|

"Then, no," Hiccup dismissed "we aren't doing it if you're uncomfortable with it."

_Well think about it. _The dragon said, looking at him strait in the eye, _You manage to shoot me down, a shot that is nearly impossible to make. And then when you come to find me your curse comes back into play. You can talk to dragons now, which allows us to communicate. This- _the dragon lifted up his tail and put it down with a thump- _happens. You happen to be knowledgeable in artificial limbs. There are too many coincidences for this to not be the work of the Norns.

-

Hiccup was silent for a while, taking all of this in, "Why couldn't I just have a normal, boring life?" Hiccup asked, looking up into the sky. He groaned and covered his eyes, falling back down to the ground, "They just keep throwing these things at me, and I feel like a puppet, you know? What do they want me to do?! I'm just one human! I can't do much!"

_I guess we'll figure out eventually. _The dragon said, watching several birds fly across the clearing.

"Fine, but if we're doing this, you need a name," Hiccup said, rubbing his eyes, "I can't just refer to you as 'dragon' or 'nightfury' all the time."

_How do you pick names then? _The dragon asked, looking down at him.

"I don't know. I've never named something before. Maybe we just brainstorm until it clicks?"

_Why are you named Hiccup? _

"My parents chose that, because I'm so small compared to other Vikings," Hiccup explained sourly, "Hiccup is a traditional name for the runt of a litter."

_So names are based off physical attributes. _

"Some of them are. It's a good start, if anything. Right soâ€| not Blacky. That makes you sound like a pet," Hiccup said, sitting up on his arms, "You kind of look like a batâ€|"

_No. I don't want to be associated with those flying rodents. _The

dragon said, making a displeased face.

"Well then, give me something to work with here."

The black creature looked down at his hind feet, thinking.

_I can retract my teeth? _He suggested, opening his mouth and showing the human how he could pull his teeth into his gums.

"How about Toothless, then?"

It's ironic. I like it. So now I have a name, how does it work?

"It's used to identify you, specifically in speech," Hiccup explained, "like say I'm looking for you, and I have no idea where you are. I would walk up to someone and ask them, 'Have you seen Toothless?' and they would say 'Yeah, I saw him over by the barn,' and then I would know where to go. Its simple things like that."

I see, like if I we were in a group, and I needed to address you specifically I would say 'Hiccup' then ask you the question. It's another form of identification, but by sound.

"Exactly," Hiccup said, smiling.

The two lapsed into silence for a minute or two, watching the clouds roll by.

_So what do you do in your village? _Toothless asked, breaking the silence.

"I do this," Hiccup said, gesturing to the tail fin, still attached to the sitting dragon's tail, "I build stuff out of metal. Like swords and axes."

_Oh, you work in one of those really smelly houses, what's the wordâ€¦ a forge? _

"Yeah, I help out there. I'm also in training to be a dragon fighterâ€¦ but I don't think I'll go very far in that field," Hiccup said sadly, shuffling his foot. He had finally gotten his wish, a chance to prove himself, and then the Norns had to rear their ugly heads. Two weeks ago he would have died to be in training. Now he was sitting here talking to a dragon, skipping classes. Life was funny like that.

Then why learn it at all?

"Because it's required," Hiccup sighed, "and a good skill to have just in case of emergency."

I see.

"So what do you do?"

I hunt, eat, sleep. Fly. Sometimes I join in on raids when the queen asks me too.

"Queen?"

A queen is a leader of a hive. They have the power to control large groups of dragons. They're kind of like the chief of a human tribe in a way. The queen leads the dragons, and in return they do her work and protect her.

"That sounds kind of like a losing situation for the normal dragons, doesn't it?"

Eh. Not really, because queens are different. They have powers that go beyond mortality. They can take a mass of panicking individuals, and guide them into strait lines. We group together under queens for the same reason humans make tribes, there is more of a chance that we'll get food. And that we will survive when attacked. Many hands make a whole, you see? But there are good queens and bad queens. Some prefer to take full control of their subject's minds, eliminating all free thought. That would be a bad queen.

"Ah, so the dragon raids, they're attacks lead by the queen?"

Yeah, for food. I'm not one of her hatchlings though; I just don't want to see dragons get hurt.

"Which is why you've never been caught before, probably," Hiccup mused, "because you can just bail when things are too dangerous."

"Everyone in my village is so terrified of you," Hiccup said quietly, looking up at the dragon sitting next to him, "they think you're a demon, that would kill them just by making eye contactâ€¦ but you're not. You're just like me, or any other person. You just happen to have a different shaped body than me. And it's not just you, but the other dragons, they're all intelligent too."

_We can fly and breathe fire. _The dragon reminded him, his ear fins lowering to his head, _We eat meat, and some of us even eat humans. Your people fear and hate us for good reasons. _

"Yeah I guess you're right," Hiccup sighed, drawing a spiral in the dirt with his stick, "I just feel like things could be different, you know?"

Yeah, I feel that way sometimes, too.

The two fell back into silence.

"If I'm going toâ€¦ if we're going to do this I'm going to need to make a saddle."

_Of course. _Toothless snorted. _I don't want your boney butt poking me._

"Ha, Ha. Very funny." Hiccup said "As I was saying, other than that it should be simple to keep the tail fin open."

"Actually," Hiccup said, his eyes lingering on the broken net still attached to the wall, "I thinkâ€¦ that we could at least get you out of this hole with what we have here."

Really?

"Yeah, we just need some rope, give me a second," Hiccup said, standing up and starting to climb the boulders to get out of the cove.

Do you actually think this will work?

"I hope so," Hiccup said from the rim of the cove as he walked over to the broken net, still hanging over the wall. He undid the nails keeping it in the ground, and made his way back into the cove, "At least this thing is going to have a purpose, rather than just becoming trash," he said, then started unweaving it. He didn't stop until he had a long enough length, and then cut it off with his knife.

"Right now I just tie it here," Hiccup said, tying one end to the first metal rung of the artificial tail, "andâ€¦ that should be good enough to get you out of this cove," he said, "eh, where do you want me to sit?"

_On my shoulder blades, I guess. _Toothless said, crouching down.

Hiccup nodded, and making sure that the rope wasn't going to get tangled in Toothless' wing he sat down on top of the dragon and pulled the rope taut, the tail opening easily.

_Hold on. _Toothless warned, and then stood up.

"Whoa," Hiccup said, catching his balance with his free hand.

_No, this isn't going to work. _Toothless advised, crouching back down on the ground, nearly causing Hiccup to fall off, _You need both hands to hold on with or you're going to fall off._

"Yeah, I guess you're right..." Hiccup said, jumping off, he looked down at the net, "I can use part of this to hold on," he said, picking up a piece of the ruined net, "and we can tie the rope to my leg, and I'll control the tail fin that way."

_Sounds like a plan. _Toothless said, walking forward and letting Hiccup tie the piece of netting around his neck. _Let's just hope we don't fall and bash out skulls in. _

"You aren't much of an optimist, are you?" Hiccup asked, after he had secured the netting around his neck.

Toothless shrugged, _More of a realist. _Flapping his wings a little, and lowered his neck so Hiccup could get on. Hiccup got up again, and tied the rope to his left foot, making sure the line was taut.

"Alright, let's try this again," he said, gripping onto the broken netting.

Toothless unfurled his wings again, and raised them, then jumped forward and brought them down.

Hiccup closed his eyes, expecting them to hit the water, but another beat of the wings brought them higher.

"We're up!" Hiccup laughed happily, picking up on Toothless' sudden burst of happiness.

Hold on tight.

Toothless twisted his body, and they took a banking left turn, down the length of the cove, rising higher as they went.

By the time they had reached the wall, they were higher than it, and then the trees, soaring just above their tops.

Hiccup looked down and gasped, looking at how high they were, the ground flashing past them quickly.

"This is amazing."

This is nothing.

Toothless turned his body again, and they came across a clearing in the trees.

We're going down, be careful not to fall off.

Toothless said, and curled up his wings.

The ground came in fast, and even though Hiccup was sure Toothless had landed as gently as he could, Hiccup still found himself almost being thrown off due to momentum. He made a mental note to add a harness to the saddle.

"That was so cool!" Hiccup said, jumping off the dragon, tripping over the rope connecting him to the tail.

_I'm just glad to be out of that hole. _Toothless said, helping Hiccup untangle himself

"Yeah, this is like the best day ever. So much better than training."

You're missing training right now? Won't you get in trouble?

"I'll probably just have to feed the dragons or something as a punishment-" Hiccup shrugged, untying the rope from his foot-"helping you, was more important."

_We should get you back to the village. _Toothless said, his mood dropping, bringing Hiccup's energy levels down with him, _Untie the rope and get back on; I'll take you closer in._

"Okay," Hiccup said, untying the rope, and getting back on Toothless.

Hold on, we're gonna go fast.

"Ready," Hiccup said, holding onto the netting, and Toothless took off toward the village, fast.

The trees were going by in a quick blur, the world turned to a foggy green. Toothless bounded over logs and boulders with ease, weaving

through the trees almost like a spirit.

It all came to an end too soon; as the dragon slid to a stop and Hiccup could just make out the smoke of chimneys in the distance.

"Wow," Hiccup said, dismounting, "you really are fast."

_Thanks. _

Hiccup untied the rope from Toothless' neck, and after a second of contemplation, he removed the tail, "I'm going to make some adjustments to this," He explained, "now that you're not in the cove, where do you want to meet up? This close to the town you'll be found for sure."

I'll meet you at the crash site around noon tomorrow. Toothless said, nudging him toward the town. N_o more skipping training either, understand?_

"Right," Hiccup said, gathering up his supplies, "see you tomorrow, Toothless."

_Have a good day, Hiccup. _The dragon said, then took off into the woods.

Hiccup quickly went and dropped the tail and ropes at his house, grabbed his sword, and ran up to the arena.

8. Ticking Clocks

A/N: I do not own HTTYD or any of the characters.

Special thanks to HurryPollo for editing.

Reviews are appreciated.

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><p>Ch. 8: Ticking Clocks<p>

Gobber was mad, but it wasn't too terrible.

Hiccup got a stern lecture, and Gobber told him he had to clean out the dragon cages, as soon as his training with Betty was finished.

Betty made him repeat the stances he had learned yesterday, correcting his posture every now and then. They worked for two hours, than Hiccup went to clean the cages, completely exhausted at this point.

"Just shovel everything into this cart and put down a layer of fresh hay," Gobber said, handing him a large, flat shovel, "they usually just focus on the food in the arena, so you should be good."

"If they try and eat you, well it's your fault for being late. Don't bother with the Monstrous Nightmare, I'll do him later."

"Right, sorry again" Hiccup concealed a yawn as Gobber went off, and he turned to the task at hand.

He waited until Gobber was out of the arena, and he was sure that he was alone to start.

He walked up to the Gronckle's door-"Hello?" he said, knocking on it slightly, "I'm here to clean out your cage, so if you could not eat me when I open the door, that would be greatly appreciated."

_Why would anyone want to eat a human? Yuck. _The childish voice echoed from the Terrible Terror's cage. There were rumbles of laughter from the other cages.

"None of you guy eat humans? Good, that's reassuring," Hiccup said, and waited for the reactions.

Surprise from all five dragons hit him, then disbelief.

_Did he hear that? _One of the Zippleback voices whispered, and the other head shushed him.

"Yes I did," Hiccup said, adjusting the shovel, "I can understand all of you."

_Well that's not something you see every day. _The Gronckle said.

_Wait are you that skinny kid with the brown hair? _ The Nadder said, feeling foolish, _No wonder you kept dodging me in that maze! You knew exactly where I was!_

"Yeah, it's me. I would have introduced myself earlier, but you know how people are around here. They see me talking to a dragonâ€¦ well I would probably be thrown in jail for being insane."

"I'm letting you guys out now," Hiccup warned, taking a deep breath, he pulled the lever on the Gronckle's cage, letting her out. Then he walked over to the Nadder's cage, throwing that lever as well. He went down the line and opened all the doors, including the Monstrous Nightmare's.

"Hi, I'm Hiccup," he said nervously, giving a small wave, "nice to meet you all."

The dragons each mumbled a greeting back, and Hiccup could tell that they were all still eyeing him warily, but proceeded to the food cart anyway.

He decided it was best to get to work, and he started shoveling out the cages.

_So how come you can talk to us? _The Gronckle asked, _No normal human can._

"Curse, of a sort." Hiccup explained the events of the last few days to the dragons, about him shooting down Toothless, and then discovering his 'destiny', finding Toothless trapped, and then helping him get free again.

"And thus I'm here," Hiccup said, tiredly moving the waste cart over to the next cage.

_You can feel our emotions, our pain? _The Monstrous Nightmare asked, his orange eyes glowing eerily.

"Yeah, why do you ask?"

_That's one of the signs, isn't it? _One of the Zippleback's said; turning to its twin, the other head shushed him again.

"Signs? What signs?" Hiccup asked, frowning.

_It's not for us to explain. _The Gronckle said, _But I'm going to tell you now that meeting the Nightfury was no coincidence._

_You need to visit the queen. _The Nadder chimed in, sounding serious, _Have the Nightfury take you there as soon as you can.

_

"You mean the dragon queen? The one who leads the raids?" Hiccup asked, pausing in his hay shoveling, "Why?"

_She can tell you the truth about your curse. _The Nadder said, _We can't because it's not our place._

"I see, I'll keep that in mind," Hiccup said, continuing his work.

"So how did all of you end up here?" he asked, starting work on the last cage.

The Terrible Terror looked up from the fish he was eating, _I was captured when I snuck into the food storage, and caught in a trap._

_The rest of us were captured in raids. _The Gronckle supplied, munching on a rock. But_ we've all been here for different periods of time. I've been here for thirty years?_

"Thirty?!" Hiccup said, looking up in amazement, "Wow, that's a long time!"

_We've been here for ten. _The Zippleback's supplied in unison.

_Fifteen. _Said the Nadder, who had finished eating and was preening herself.

_Two years? Give or take a month. _The Terror said.

_A week. _The Monstrous Nightmare said sadly and Hiccup felt each of the dragons express some form of sadness.

"That's right whoever finishes first in training is going to kill you,_" Hiccup said sadly.

There was a moment of silence, as Hiccup actually considered how twisted their 'prize' actually was for the first time.

"What the?!" Gobber's voice came from the edge of the pit, and Hiccup looked up, to see the blond man running to the edge, "Hiccup! What the hell are you doing?!"

"I'm cleaning out the cages," Hiccup said, blankly.

"Yeah, one at a time, not to let the whole bloody lot out," Gobber yelled, gesturing to the group of dragons, "are you trying to get killed?"

_He thinks we're going to attack you. _One of the Zippleback's chuckled.

Oh, what do we do? Should we actually attack him? The other one said, looking around, at Hiccup.

_Just keep eating your fish. _The Gronckle said, picking up another rock to chew on.

"No. This way's faster," Hiccup said, as the dragon's lapsed into silence.

"Hey Gobber, I was wondering if- whoa, what in Thor's name is going on in there?!" Snotlout said, walking up to the cage.

The twins soon followed him.

"Oh, is the punishment for skipping a battle royal?" Ruffnut said, climbing onto the bars, "I wanna watch!"

"I'm not fighting anything," Hiccup said tiredly, "I'm just cleaning the cages out. Why is this a big deal all of a sudden?"

"Oh boo, so you aren't going to get eaten?" Tuffnut scowled down at him.

"Hey Astrid, come check this out, Hiccup is totally just chilling with the dragons," Ruffnut said, turning around, pointing down at the freckled boy.

Astrid walked up and took in the scene with wide eyes.

"It's like they know he couldn't hurt them, even if he tried," Snotlout said, laughing, "he's such a wimp they just ignore him."

Hiccup reasoned that Snotlout was such an idiot, he wouldn't understand even if Hiccup explained. So he ignored them, and continued to shovel hay into the cells.

_These people aren't very nice to you are they? _The Gronckle observed, looking up at the small crowd forming.

Let's see if we can give them a scareâ€¦ a Zippleback said, raising its long neck easily to above the bars. It opened its mouth, and let out a cloud of green smoke. The group quickly scattered, afraid of being blown up.

Several of the dragons chuckled.

Hiccup finished unloading the hay soon after that.

"All right, you five, back into your cages!" Hiccup said, putting down the pitch fork when he was done.

The dragons all grumbled their good byes, and Hiccup waved each of the dragons into their cages, closing the doors behind them.

The others watched in amazement.

"How did you do that?" Astrid said, once the door to the last cage had been closed.

"I have to, uh, go work," he said, making his escape, the others looking at him blankly.

When he made it to the forge, he went into the back room Gobber used for storage, and Hiccup for planning.

He pulled out the scroll on saddle construction.

He spent another all-nighter sowing the leather strips together and forming the shape of the saddle.

Gobber found him in the morning, putting the final stitches into his work.

"You've been up all night?" he asked, checking the fire in the forge.

"Is it morning already?" Hiccup blinked, rubbing his eyes, looking up from his work tiredly, blinking at the lightening sky, "Oh, wow."

"You get too absorbed in your work, Hiccup. You need to remember to take care of yourself," Gobber said, looking at the nearly finished product in Hiccup's hands, "at least take a bath before you head up to dragon training, you don't want to smell like leather treatment in front of the girls, do you? What are you working on anyway?"

"Saddle," Hiccup said, still sowing the two halves together as he talked, "it's for a€| thing."

"Just don't ride whatever contraption you're making off a cliff," Gobber sighed "go on, I'll clean up here. I seriously don't want to be smelling this all day."

"Alright," Hiccup said, putting the saddle in the back work room, "I'll see you at dragon training," he said, hanging up his apron and picking up his sword.

He headed up to his house, walking around the back.

Leaning against the back wall was a large metal tub, which Hiccup dragged inside and placed over the fire pit in the middle of the room.

He then took a bucket off the wall, filling it at the pump outside. He filled it, and lugged it back to the tub, doing this some twenty

or so times to fill the tub.

Finally, with the tub filled, he retrieved the soap from storage, and started to undress.

The water was lukewarm from the fire, which was a blessing on Hiccup's sore muscles; he relaxed in the tub, noticing for the first time just how exhausted he was.

He stared up at the rafters, thinking of the dragons in the training pit, and trying not to fall asleep.

They had just as much of a right to be free as the other dragons, they didn't deserve to be killed in such a way.

He needed to free them before training was finished, but he would be killed if he was caught letting them go.

And then there was the dragon queen, she could tell Hiccup about his curse?

Was his destiny really so linked to the dragons?

Maybe he was destined to finally end the dragon war.

But that would mean he would have to kill the queen, or the entire village.

Hiccup sunk into the water groggily, he didn't want to kill anyone, or anything.

But on a dragon, with Toothless, he could go anywhere.

The sky wasn't the limit anymore.

He could go to the mainland, or even farther.

A trip that would take years to make would be nothing on the back of a Nightfury.

Hiccup had always contemplated leaving Berk, running away as a stowaway, or sailing off by himself.

But reality always kept him here.

He couldn't defend himself, couldn't do any sort of work that would keep him fed.

If he left Berk he would probably starve to death, or be killed.

But now fate was basically trying to shove him off the island.

Hiccup sighed and grabbed the soap off the side table, begging to scrub his pale limbs clean.

He made up a mental list of what needed to be done:

Dragon practice today

Sword practice afterwards

Finish saddle, and take it to Toothless

Talk to the black dragon about visiting the queen

Start planning on how to release the dragons without being caught

Find some time to show up for work at the forge

Get a good night's sleep

Hiccup nodded, satisfied with the list, and actually started paying attention to cleaning the chemicals out of his skin. He reached around, and started to wash his back, when he felt it-

A smoothed out area on his right shoulder, a patch that was definitely not the same texture as his skin.

He felt his whole body tremble in panic.

He stood out of the tub, not caring about the water splashing on to the floor.

He grabbed a shield off the wall and stood in front of another shield, using the reflections of the middle metal piece to look at his back.

His arms started shaking at what he saw, a small black area just on his right shoulder blade.

A mark of some kind.

He reached around and touched the smooth patch, distinctly harder than the rest of his skin.

The transformation, it was starting.

Hiccup dropped the shield and sat down on the wooden steps, cupping his head in his hands.

He was running out of time.

9. Honest Truths

****A/N: I do not own HTTYD or any of these characters.****

****Special thanks to HurryPollo for editing.****

****Reviews are appreciated.****

* * *

><p>Ch. 9: Honest Truths<p>

They practiced with the Zippleback that day, and needless to say it was humiliating.

The two headed beast decided to specifically target him, just for humor.

It had Hiccup running around the cage, tripping over himself because of his exhaustion.

Thankfully, Astrid had managed to stop the thing, by knocking it out with a shield.

In sword practice, Betty taught him some new stances, as well as the basic concepts of actually fighting with a blade. She chided him several times for not getting a good night's rest, giving him several hard whacks when he nearly fell asleep on her.

Sword work was difficult, but he was progressing slowly.

Hiccup's day started to look up when he showed up to work at the forge, and Gobber told him to go home because he was in no condition to be working in such a dangerous environment.

Hiccup grabbed the unfinished saddle, and the rest of the needed materials, before heading off into the woods.

You need sleep, Toothless said, when Hiccup found him, hanging like a bat from a tree.

"I know, I'll do that when I have time," Hiccup sighed, sitting down and setting out his supplies, "I just have a few more stitches, and then I have to treat this thing again, then we're done."

You may be done, but we are not flying today, I feel weary just looking at you.

"I talked to the dragons in the arena yesterday," Hiccup changed the subject, and noticed Toothless' fins perk up.

"They said that I should go see the dragon queen, and talk to her about my curse. They wouldn't say why though."

That's not a bad idea actually. The queen in this area is one of the oldest, and wisest. I don't know if she would let a human into her den, though. She doesn't care much for your species.

"We also need to think of a way to get those dragons out of those cages," Hiccup said, not looking up from his work, "the Monstrous Nightmare is going to be killed in the next few weeks. I know how to open the cages; it's getting caught that's the problem."

_You really do have a big heart, _Toothless said, then suddenly jumped and scrambled up the tree, _someone is coming!_

He disappeared into the branches quietly, and Hiccup lost track of him.

The bushes moved, and Astrid walked out into the clearing.

"Hiccup?" she said, blinking at him, "What are you doing out here?"

"Just working," Hiccup said tiredly, focusing on his words, "wanted

to get some fresh air is all."

"This far from the town?" Astrid blinked, walking up, "Is that a saddle? Why are you making one of those? You don't have a horse."

"I'm just practicing the method," Hiccup lied smoothly, "you hunting?"

"Just checking some traps," Astrid said, holding up several snares in her hand, "hey, I wanted to ask you something."

"Uh, sure," Hiccup said nervously, finishing the last stitch. He tied it up and set the saddle aside, "ask away."

"What is it with you and dragons?" Astrid asked, "I mean they were just ignoring you yesterday, and today that Zippleback acted as if its goal in life was to eat you."

I wish I could have seen that.

"Yeah, thanks for saving me by the way," Hiccup said, ignoring the dragon in the tree.

"You're welcome," Astrid said, crossing her arms, "soâ€|?"

Hiccup sighed, shifting to a more comfortable position, He tried to think of a believable lie, but his tired mind just drew a blank.

_You know what? Screw this; people are just going to find out eventually, _Hiccup thought, looking up at Astrid, _I'm too busy to live in a web of lies. I'm too tired for this shit._

"You can't tell anyone," Hiccup said tiredly, and when Astrid nodded he continued, "I can talk to dragons."

"Talking to dragons? Yeah, right," she scoffed, crossing her arms, "that's a lie if I ever heard one."

"It's the truth," Hiccup shrugged, "believe me or not. Just don't tell anyone okay? It's kind of a secret between the elder, me, and my father."

"Okay," Astrid said, uncrossed her arms, walking forward to sit on another rock, "so what do they say?"

"What?"

"The dragons, what do they talk about?"

"Well the ones in the arenas usually make bets on if people are going to cry or wet themselves," Hiccup said, not really sure what to say, "the Nadder's always humming, or singing. The Zippleback heads argue a lot."

"Huh," Astrid blinked, sitting up, "and what about other dragons, like the ones around the island?"

"I don't really go looking for them," Hiccup said, "despite what you

might believe I would rather not be eaten alive."

_Again with the eating jokes, dragons don't eat people. Well most of them, it's an acquired taste I hear, _Toothless snorted from up in the trees, Hiccup ignored him.

"Is that why you let the Nightfury go? Did he say something to you?" Astrid asked, sitting down on a rock next to him. The strangeness of it all struck him. He was having a conversation with Astrid. No stuttering, no awkwardness, just a normal conversation. Hiccup marveled at this, and then remembered to answer her question.

"Yeah something like that," Hiccup said resting his elbows on his knees, "hey, you remember what you told me the other day in the ring? About figuring out a side?"

Hiccup had been contemplating that question all night, as it had made him realize just what the curse had meant. That was probably why he could have a normal conversation with Astrid, now that he thought about it. He shouldn't try to make her like him. He probably wouldn't be around for much longer. But for some reason he found that he was okay with that. If it meant he could have an honest friend on Berk, even for the short while he was still here, it would be worth it.

"Yeah," Astrid said, bringing Hiccup's focus back to the conversation at hand.

"I just want you to know," Hiccup said, looking at her, "that this war, for me, it isn't as simple as choosing a side, you know?"

"I don't understand," Astrid frowned.

"Yeah, I haven't gotten it all figured out either," Hiccup admitted, standing up and picking up the saddle and his tools, "I'm going to head home, I'm exhausted. Sorry if I gave you more questions than answers."

"Hiccup," Astrid stood up, and he turned around to look at her, "that saddle is it for a dragon?"

Hiccup didn't say anything at first, contemplating whether or not to answer. Finally settling on a, "Yes," he and the blonde parted ways.

After a few minutes, Toothless caught up with him.

Do you think it was okay to let her know that?

"Astrid keeps her word," Hiccup said, "plus I don't feel like living in a web of lies. Things are already complicated as they are."

Yeah I guess so.

"I've started to change, physically, I mean," Hiccup said tiredly to the ground, "it doesn't matter if she tells anyone, as soon as we've got flying down I want to release the dragons and visit the queen."

Toothless stopped, and Hiccup turned to face him.

_How long do you have? _he asked, and Hiccup could feel the worry and fear bubbling behind those words.

"I don't know," Hiccup admitted, looking down at the ground, weary.

Toothless stepped forward and pressed his muzzle into his hand, making Hiccup place an arm over his head, much like a cat would ask for pets.

You're scared.

"I am," Hiccup admitted, scratching the dragon's head absent mindedly, "I really am."

A wave of reassurance rose up from the dragon, washing over Hiccup; and Hiccup felt himself smiling. It felt like he couldn't remember the last time he had felt something other than apprehension or fear._

I'm here to help you Hiccup, if you need help all you need to do is ask.

"Thanks bud," Hiccup said, removing his hand. The warm feeling faded a little, but it was still there, "I needed that."

Hiccup sighed and looked off in the distance toward the village.

"I'm going to talk to the elder about it tomorrow, so I probably won't be able to make my way out here. But for now I think I'm just going to go to sleep. Will you be fine on your own?"

I'll be fine, _you just get some sleep._

"Thanks," Hiccup smiled, "I'll see you the day after tomorrow then."

10. Growing Pains

A/N: I do not own HTTYD or any of its characters.

Special thanks to HurryPollo for editing.

Reviews appreciated.

* * *

><p>Ch. 10: Growing Pains<p>

"Gothi?" Hiccup asked, knocking on the opened door, looking inside the elder's hut.

Dragon training and sparring had ended for the day, which had gone a lot better than the previous one.

The long rest had helped Hiccup a lot more than he thought it would.

He felt lighter, in a way.

The old woman looked up from the scroll she was reading and waved him in, smiling.

"Hey I need to talk to you, aboutâ€¦ you know my condition," Hiccup said, stepping into to the hut.

The mute's face turned serious, and she indicated that he should close the door; she picked up her staff and used it to close the window, blocking them from the warm sunny day outside. She turned to him, and gave him quizzical look.

"I think I'm starting to change," Hiccup said, deciding that getting strait to the point was the best way to go about this, "I can feelâ€¦ something on my right shoulder."

The old woman nodded, and guided him to sit on a chest.

"Do you want to look at it?" Hiccup asked, and the old woman nodded. Hiccup took off his fur vest than then pulled off his long sleeve tunic.

Gothi walked to his back, and he felt her cold hands on his back, around his shoulder area.

"It doesn't hurt or anything," Hiccup said, "I didn't even feel anything changeâ€¦ I just noticed it. I wish I could get a better look at itâ€¦"

He heard the woman shuffle away, and he turned to see her going through some drawers. She pulled out a hand mirror and handed it to him. She then took him into the back room, where a larger mirror was sitting on top of a bureau.

"Oh, I see," Hiccup said, and used the mirrors to look at his back just like he had with the shields.

However, unlike the shields, he was getting a much clearer image.

On his right shoulder, there was a clearly defined, tear dropped shapedâ€¦ scale, growing out of his skin. Much like a freckle, but darker and wider. It was malt black, and shiny. Along the edge of it, there were three dark marks, like bruises but more defined. Each a perfect crescent moon.

"Those marks, you think those are more scales coming up?" Hiccup asked, and Gothi nodded.

"Do you think there's any way to slow them down?"

Gothi shook her head, but then held up a finger, and walked into the main room again.

Hiccup followed her, placing down the mirror on a shelf and pulling his shirt back on.

The old woman spread a map of the archipelagoes along a table.

She pointed to the Berserker Island, and then pulled out another map, this one of the Berserker Island and its surrounding waters. She pointed to a small island just south of it, and looked at him pointedly.

"You think I could get help there?" Hiccup asked, and Gothi shrugged.

She picked up a pencil and pulled out a piece of paper, and wrote, 'The previous cure,' in very shaky handwriting.

"That's where my Dad and Mom blessed me when I was a child?" Hiccup asked, looking at the tiny dot on the map. His father had explained it to him briefly, but not much.

Gothi nodded, drawing a sun around the island on the smaller map, she rolled it up and handed it to him.

"Thank you," Hiccup said, taking the map, another clue, "I'll find a way to get there. I'll talk to Dad once he gets back; see if I can head out before winter."

Gothi nodded, and Hiccup figured that meant she thought his plan was a good one.

He said his goodbyes and walked to the forge. Gobber didn't have much work for him, which meant Hiccup got to work on whatever he wanted. He pretended to draw up schematics for a plowing machine that one could ride, until the man left for home. As soon as he was gone he pulled the tail fin and saddle out from hiding, and began to get to work.

He adjusted the bearings in the tail to react to the tightening of the rope, and replaced the impromptu rope with a thin chain encased in leather, to prevent a break.

Once that was done he started treatment on the saddle, so that it wouldn't be hurt by harsh conditions.

While waiting for it to dry, he started designs for a foot pedal to control the tail fin with.

He could just attach the chain to his foot, but that wouldn't be practical for long flights.

"Odin's ghost, what is that smell?!" Astrid said from the front room, making Hiccup look up from his plans, "Ugh, Hiccup are you here?"

"Yeah, give me a second," Hiccup called, quickly grabbing the tail fin and shoving it in a basket. He dumped all of his papers into it as well, then went into the front of the shop, "Sorry about the smell, I was treating some leather."

"You mean that saddle?" Astrid asked, she was standing at the shop entrance, covering her nose, "Ugh, it's bad. How can you stand it?"

"You've never taken my Dad's boots out on boot day," Hiccup said honestly, walking around the anvil to her, "did you need

something?"

"Yeah, I was wondering if I could get my axe handle refitted, it keeps slipping in my hand," Astrid said, holding up the weapon in question.

"Sure, just give me a second," Hiccup said, taking the battle axe from the blonde, nearly dropping it immediately from the weight, "man, this is heavy."

"Careful, it's my mother's."

"Right," Hiccup grunted, placing the weapon in the vise, "do you want a new handle? Or just want to replace the leather bindings?"

"Just the leather will do," Astrid said, walking a little into the forge looking at the weapons on the wall, "so what kind of dragon are you-"

"Shhh!" Hiccup said, turning to her, "Don't you know anything about secrecy?"

"It's just us; I don't see what the big deal is?"

"Maybe, but if you'll notice this building doesn't really have walls, people can still hear you"* Hiccup said, looking to make sure there wasn't anyone on the road outside.

"I never knew you were so paranoid."

"I have to be, don't I? Half the town would love to see me locked up in the jail for insanity." Hiccup said, pulling the leather strap drawer out of the bench, and placing it on the table.

"Well, you do have a record of getting things set on fire," Astrid said honestly, leaning up against the far work table.

"Why do you think they want me locked up?" Hiccup snorted, beginning to remove the old straps from the axe's handle.

"So, I've been wondering, what are you going to do?"

"What?"

Astrid rolled her eyes, "About your... talent. Don't tell me you're just going to keep it a secret?"

"People will find out eventually," Hiccup conceded, "but I want to keep it a secret for as long as I can."

"So you're just going to live as if you don't have this power? Hiccup, what if the gods gave you this ability to do something great?"

Hiccup snorted, "Who says I'm just going to ignore having this power?" Hiccup said, turning and pointing at her, "Just because I'm keeping it a secret doesn't mean I'm not doing something with it," he tossed a handful of leather into the waste bin.

"But why work in the shadows? It's not right."

"Why do you care anyway?" Hiccup asked, picking up the newer leather and working it so it would be more malleable, "Why are you suddenly interested in what I do? You've never even given me the time of day before."

"Because we're friends, aren't we?" Astrid glared, making Hiccup blink. Were friends really this easy to make? "I just want to know what's going on. I promise I'm not going to turn around and stab you in the back."

"Curiosity killed the cat Astrid," Hiccup warned.

"Well then, it's a good thing I'm not a cat."

Hiccup could feel the honesty in her statement. He continued working the leather, thinking, "If I tell you. You won't say anything to the others? You won't try to stop me?"

"If it's something illegal, I will," Astrid said, crossing her arms.

"It isn't anything illegal," Hiccup assured, turning to wrap the leather grip around the handle, "I'mâ€| leaving the island."

"What? When?"

"I don't know, yet," Hiccup said, finishing the handle expertly, not turning to look at the girl, "I'll probably leave in the next week or so."

"But you could do so many good things here! You could help end this war!"

"Possibly," Hiccup said, picking the axe out of the vise grip, and turning to Astrid, "but things aren't that simple."

"The reason I can talk to dragons," he said, testing the weight of the weapon in his hand, "is because I've been cursed."

"Really?" Astrid said, eyes going wide in surprise.

"The reason I'm leaving, is because the dragons say their Queen can lift itâ€| you told me one time to figure out what side of this war I'm going to fight on.

"The truth is, I'm already fighting my own war, and I don't have room for another.

"Soâ€| make sure to get a few hits in for me."

He raised his arms, presenting Astrid with the finished ax.

The blond took it from him, looking resolved, "Of course."

* * *

><p>*Look at the designs in the movie, most of the building is open.<p>

11. Test Flight

A/N: I do not own HTTYD or any of its characters.

Special thanks to HurryPollo for editing

Review are always welcome.

* * *

><p>Ch. 11: Test Flight<p>

"You sure it's all fitting well? Not pinching you anywhere?" Hiccup asked, referring to full flying rig on the Nightfury. It had taken a few days, but he had managed to create a pressured pedal that could be used to control the tail fin.

_I don't know. I've never worn one of these things before, _Toothless said, moving about, getting a feel for wearing the leather.

"Well, make sure to tell me if it starts chaffing, or-"

Are we finally going to get up in the air today? Or are you just going to stand there?

"Well, someone's grouchy today."

I want to fly, Hiccup. Being on the ground this long makes me antsy.

"Alright, alright," Hiccup sighed, adjusting his flying harness, he climbed up into the saddle, securing himself, "let's do this, position 3," he muttered, adjusting the foot pedal.

With a great beat of his wings, Toothless took off into the air, quickly gaining altitude.

"Oh, that's a big drop," Hiccup said when he looked down, holding on tighter to the saddle grips.

_Don't scare yourself, there is nothing to worry about, _Toothless said, as they broke free of land, soaring kilometers above the rocky ocean, _just listen to my mind, let its instincts guide you._

"Right, right," Hiccup said, "let's take this nice and slow. Position three, no four."

_Let's do this. _Toothless rumbled, shifting his weight.

Hiccup adjusted the tail, and the two turned into a wide sweeping turn.

Toothless' body angled steeply, forcing Hiccup to rise out of the saddle a little, checked to make sure the saddle wasn't going to shift as they came out of the turn.

He checked behind them to make sure the tail fin was holding.

_You need to focus more on flying, less on worrying. _

"Right, right," Hiccup said, taking a deep. He relaxed, trying to clear his mind. He focused on the dragon's thoughts below him, feeling the mind working beneath him.

"Let's go," Hiccup said, and he felt Toothless begin to go into a dive.

Hiccup adjusted the foot petal, and they dove down, right underneath a sea stack. Hiccup glanced up at the birds nesting in the rocks above as they evened out.

"Yes, it worked," Hiccup said, turning back to check the tail fin.

_Hiccup! _Toothless said, and he felt a wave of alarm rise through the dragon.

Hiccup turned in time to see them hit a stack, Toothless managing to push away strait into another one.

"Sorry, my bad," Hiccup winced, feeling the pain in Toothless's leg and side.

_Pay attention! _Toothless chided, managing to hit him in the face with his ear fin, _Come on, let's regain altitude._

"Right, sorry. Position four, no three," Hiccup said, adjusting the petal, and the two began to climb.

As Toothless began to climb excitement bubbled up at being free to fly again. The feeling was contagious, and it made Hiccup smile, "Yeah!" he cheered, as they climbed past the mountain "This is amazing! The wind in my- my cheat sheet! Stop!"

Toothless immediately froze, but Hiccup, however, kept moving due to momentum.

The two began to fall.

_Hiccup! _Toothless yelled, and the panic and concern ruptured through Hiccup.

"Calm down!" Hiccup yelled, clutching his head, "You got to angle yourself toward me!" he yelled, reaching out toward the black dragon, who was spinning out of control.

Hiccup was flung back when the dragon's tail came bearing across his face.

_Sorry! _Toothless yelled as they flew apart, and used his secondary fins to bring them back closer together.

Hiccup reached out, and managed to grab hold of the saddle.

Reattaching his safety harness.

Kicked back the tail fin, and Toothless opened his wings, they

skimmed the treetops at top speed.

The edges of Toothless' wings burning from the strain they were putting on them.

_Hiccup there are rocks! _Toothless said the same second Hiccup laid eyes on them.

Hiccup pulled his cheat sheet out of his mouth. How in Thor's name did he still have it?! He looked at it, the wind and panic making his mind sputter to remember what the symbols meant.

He looked down at the approaching rocks, reaching for Toothless' mind unconsciously for support. Their two minds came together, like two cogs in a machine.

And Hiccup could suddenly see where the dragon wanted to fly, how he needed to fly. Hiccup let go of the cheat sheet and leaned forward.

They buckled down, diving into the maze of pillars, weaving through them at break neck speed.

Together they rolled to fit through a gap between two pillars, and dived to duck beneath an overhang, then turned to the right to dodge a stack.

They broke clear of the rocks, and flew over the slate grey sea.

"YEAH!" Hiccup said, sitting up in the saddle, throwing his hands up, the adrenaline still beating through his veins.

Toothless shared the enthusiasm, shooting off a burst of fire in celebration, it hung in midair, and the two were heading directly toward it.

"Oh no," Hiccup said, lowering his arms, as they rode strait through the burst of flame.

They burst through the fire, Hiccup shielding his face with his arms.

"Ow, ow, ow," Hiccup said, putting out his smoldering sleeves, Toothless let out a throaty laugh below him, "hey, it's not funny, I'm not exactly fireproof, and neither is this equipment."

_Sorry, _Toothless said, but Hiccup could tell that he wasn't, _shall we land and have some lunch? My wings are sore from that fall._

"Alright," Hiccup said, adjusting the tail fin, "is this what you meant by listening to your mind?" he asked, as they banked, referring to the gear-turning connection he felt between the two of them.

_Yeah, it means our minds are working together. _

"It's a weird feeling."

_You'll get use it. _Toothless said, as they leveled down to the water, flying just over the surface. Fish underneath the water started to swim away from the Nightfury. They leisurely herded them toward the shore, where Toothless easily knocked the lot out of the water with a blast.

They repeated this twice, until there was a pile of fish lying on the sand stone stacks.

"Well, that's probably the quickest catch I've ever gotten," Hiccup said, dismounting, "do you want me to take the saddle off, or are you good?"

_I'm good, it isn't pinching me anywhere, _Toothless said picking up a fish, and swallowing it whole.

"Yeah, I guess I would feel that," Hiccup said, "I'm going to go find some kindling, be right back."

You can eat them raw.

"Just because I can, doesn't mean I will," Hiccup called over his shoulder, "leave me at least two?"

Then you better hurry back.

Hiccup rolled his eyes, and walked off, he found some drift wood along the beach's edge, and picked it up, bringing an armload back, he put them into a pile.

Toothless set the sticks on fire, and Hiccup skewered one fish and started to cook it.

_So I think that besides nearly dropping to death, we did pretty well. _Toothless said as Hiccup sat down and leaned against his side.

"Yeah," Hiccup said, conflicted. On one hand he was happy that all his hard work was paying off, on the other he was afraid of what that meant.

He and Toothless weren't anchored to the ground anymore.

That meant that they would be leaving soon.

Training had been going well enough; none of the other dragons seemed to take up the 'chase Hiccup' game the Zippleback had started. Astrid hadn't been giving him too much trouble, she hadn't told anyone about their conversation, though they had talked about it a few times. Snotlout had been furious about this latest development. Hiccup had been waiting for the shoe to drop in that area. Betty and he had actually started sparring freely, but it was still basic training.

It was ironic; his life here on Berk was finally starting to look up in the few moments before he had to leave it.

_I just hope Astrid won't be pissed about the dragons being released, _Hiccup thought, staring off into the fire. He and Toothless had decided on springing the dragons loose the same night they left Berk.

He had talked to them about it, and they all were exited at the opportunity to be free again, and the Monstrous Nightmare had been elated to be relieved of his impending death.

_You're brooding again, _Toothless hummed, looking at him sideways, _what is it now?_

"I'm thinking," Hiccup said, feeling excited, but nauseous, at the same time, "that tonight is the night."

_Tonight? _Toothless blinked, but then nodded, _Yeah_â€¦ _I guess there isn't anything keeping us from going. _

"Training ends in three days," Hiccup said, pulling his fish off the fire and bringing it closer to himself, "it's now or never. I guess."

A cluster of roars and small hisses came from off in the distance, and both of them looked up to see four Terrible Terrors approaching the beach. Toothless placed a hand around his fish and growled.

_Scavengers, _He said, growling low, as they approached.

_Food? _one of the Terrors said, approaching the pile. Hiccup could feel that the four dragons were really young compared to the Terror from the ring, practically babies in comparison. But for some reason they felt strange to him, as if there was a wall keeping them from his thoughts.

Food, gimme, the yellow one said, going straight for the pile.

_Go away! _Toothless snapped, making a yellowish one get away from the pile. A green one succeeded in dragging a regurgitated head away from the pile. The yellow one tried to get to the head, but the two ended up in a fight. Hiccup watched the two fight, and a third Terror take off with the head.

_Hey that's mine! _The green one yelled, and they all started fighting.

_Oh no you don't, _Toothless said, and Hiccup turned to see him pull a fish away from another green dragon. The thing fell comically to the ground and Toothless laughed at it.

_Gimme, _the dragon growled, scrapping its feet as if to charge, then reared back, about to breathe fire.

Toothless stopped it cold though, shooting a small flame into the Terror's mouth making the attack backfire, _It's what you deserve, _Toothless rumbled, as the dragon tottered away.

"I didn't feel that," Hiccup said, looking at the tiny dragon, confused.

What do you mean?

"Every dragon I've met so far," Hiccup frowned, "I've been able to feel their pain, and listen to them. But I'm not feeling anything from these guys, I'm getting the feeling that something isâ€¦ I don't

know, shielding them."

_That would be the dragon queen, _Toothless said, _these four are part of her nest._

"Huh," Hiccup said, watching the four fight over the fish head. "now that you mention it, they do have thisâ€¦ feel to them, like a flavor?"

_That's the queen's mark, _Toothless said, and hissed when the yellow Terror tried to get at his pile again.

_Gimme! _It whined, much like a spoiled child.

Go catch your own.

No, the yellow Terror said, stomping its foot angrily.

All of the Terrors suddenly paused, looking up in the direction where they had come from, and Hiccup felt another dragon's presence from that direction, _Mommy! _The baby dragons called, scrambling over each other to leave in that direction, and just as quickly as they had come, they left.

"Was that their mother calling them?" Hiccup asked

_Yes, and I say good riddance, _Toothless snorted, eating another fish, _finish eating, Hiccup. We have work to do, and I think those things will be back to 'play' once their mom had fed the lot of them._

"You don't like other dragons?"

I don't like children.

"Good to know," Hiccup said, starting to eat his cooked fish.

The two finished up quickly, and then began their flight back to Berk.

"Oh dear," Hiccup said, as they came around the mountain peak, to the side of the island where the town was located.

_What? The ship? _Toothless said, narrowing his eyes at the ship limping its way into the harbor, _Who is that?_

"My Dad's back," Hiccup said, "he's been on a hunt for the dragon's nest. I was hoping I would leave before he got back, you know, to avoid the awkward conversation."

Well, it looks like that's not going to happen.

"Yeah, I can see that," Hiccup said, as they took a sharp right to land in the woods, Hiccup dismounted quickly, "go, I'll meet you at the cove once I've freed the dragons in the ring."

_Be safe Hiccup, _Toothless said, nudging him before taking off quickly into the woods.

12. Leaving the Nest

****A/N: I do not own HTTYD or any of its characters.****

****Special thanks to HurryPollo for editing and helping me with the art.****

****Updates are every Thursday evening or Friday morning.****

****As you may have noticed, the story art changed! Because I finally got around to finishing it. The full image can be found on my deviant art:** darkmickyangel** (surprise, surprise it's the same name)**

****The image should be pretty simple to find, its in my gallery. you can see more details, and even the labeling in my own crappy handwriting. If you want a direct link just ask, idk how to put urls up here. Oh, ****ignore the other art is from middle school. i look back and i kinda (.~_~.) ****

******Reviews are welcome.******

*** * ***

><p>Ch. 12: Leaving the Nest<p>

Hiccup and Toothless split up, Toothless to the woods, and Hiccup to the village. The ship hadn't docked yet, so Hiccup took this opportunity to head into the forge and pack his tools while Gobber wasn't present.

He took mostly the tools that belonged to him, and the ones that would be needed to repair Toothless' rig if it got damaged. He wrapped them in a bundle, and headed in the opposite direction of where everyone was headed.

"Hiccup," Astrid said, as he passed her, and she stepped out of the crowd, "the ships have returned," she said, then paused when she saw his singed clothes, "uh, did something happen? With that thing I'm not supposed to talk about?"

"What? Oh, no. Everything with that is fine," Hiccup said. He made sure no one was watching them, and had her follow him into an alleyway, "I'm headed out tonight," he said, adjusting the leather roll of tools in his arms.

"Oh," Astrid said, looking sad, "I see. You were waiting for your father to return."

"Yeah," Hiccup sighed, "Astrid, before I go I want to say somethingâ€¦ I wanted to say thanks. You've been really understanding about this whole matter."

"You're welcome," Astrid said, standing up straighter, "I don't know exactly what I've done to deserve thanks though."

"Well, keeping the Zippleback away from me is one thing," Hiccup said, and Astrid smirked, probably at the memory of him being chased by the damn thing, "and keeping this a secret from the others, I know you don't like them. You've been a great friend."

"Well," she said, pausing, "thank you for being honest. I hope you find what you need, win this war of yours."

"I do too," Hiccup nodded, "I've got to go pack now, say hi to your mother for me," he said, giving a small wave and turning to leave, "goodbye, Astrid."

"Bye, Hiccup. Have a safe trip," she said, giving a sad wave and then turned to go meet her parents down at the docks.

Hiccup made his way up to his house, and began to pack. He could only fit one bag on Toothless, so he had to travel light. He put his tools at the bottom of the bag, and rolled up his sleeping blanket. He was folding what clothes he had when Stoick came into the house.

"Hiccup."

"I'm up here," Hiccup said, taking a deep breath, before walking down the wooden stairs, "welcome home."

"The Hofferma girl said I should meet you up here, is something wrong?" Stoick asked, putting down his bag of luggage and walking forward. The man looked worried

"Yes and no," Hiccup said, "Dadâ€¦ I'm leaving,"

Stoick froze, and the surprise on his face made Hiccup's heart wrench.

"Is this about the curse?" he asked, face falling back to his usual stoic expression. Hiccup could tell it was a façade though.

"Yeah, Gothi told me where you and Mom went to prevent it," Hiccup said, coming down to the ground floor slowly, "she gave me a map."

"The priest told your mother that the blessing would only prevent it once, and not forever," Stoick said, "you won't find anything there."

"I know, but I have to try, don't I?" Hiccup insisted, stepping forward, "I'm only taking your advice. I'm not just going to sit here and- I have to do something."

Stoick sighed heavily, "You're right. I just wish all this wasn't happening... Which ship are you taking?"

"Actually," Hiccup said, preparing himself. This was going to be the hardest part of the conversation, and the reason why Hiccup would have been happy to leave and explain this via a note, "I'm not taking a boat."

"What do you mean?" Stoick asked, confused "You can't walk there, Son"

"No," Hiccup said, lifting his chin up, "but I can fly there."

"Fly?"

"Yes," Hiccup said, "on a Nightfury."

"WHAT?!"

"Calm down Dad, let me explain."

"You've been- Odin, help me! The Nightfury!?"

"He says he can take me to someone who might be able to tell me more about this curse," Hiccup said calmly, which seemed to make his father pause, "I downed him when I hit him with the boa, I've been talking to him."

"It can speak?" Stoick asked, sounding astonished.

"_His_ name is Toothless," Hiccup stressed, "and yes, he can speak to me. It has something to do with the curse- we think."

"Because he's a demon that works in the _night,_ " Stoick said, "it's in its name for Thor's sake. We're trying to not turn you into some dark creature. For all you know it could be planning to- to steal you away."

"That's not going to happen," Hiccup said flatly, "I injured his tail," he stressed, "without me he can't fly."

Stoick seemed to pause at this, squinting down at him, "You mean the Nightfury is trapped on the island? It's vulnerable?"

"Don't even go there!" Hiccup yelled, realizing the train of thought his father was on. If there was even a chance the Nightfury could be taken down, "If you kill Toothless, you kill any chance of me getting rid of this curse."

"So you know where it is?" Stoick asked, looking out toward the direction of the forest, as if he could see Toothless' hiding place.

"The Nightfury is helping me Dad, he's the best chance that I- which _we_ have right now," Hiccup insisted, grabbing his father's arm and making him look down at him "if you kill him, you might as well kill me as well. He's the only chance we've got at finding a cure."

Stoick and he stared each other down for a minute, and only the sound of the fire could be heard.

"Very well then," Stoick said, crossing his arms, "I can see you've made up your mind. No changing it now."

"Thank you," Hiccup said, relieved.

"Do you have to leave tonight?" Stoick asked, the sadness evident in his voice.

"The sooner the better" Hiccup said, "winter's coming, you know?"

"You've packed?" Stoick asked, and Hiccup could hear him getting into 'chief' mode. Stoick may be awkward when it came to parenting, but he knew how to be prepared.

"Nearly" Hiccup said, "do you want to check over my bag?"

"Bring them down" Stoick said "I'm not having you go on an adventure, just to starve to death"

Hiccup nodded and retrieved the bag from his bed.

"These blankets are too thin for winter, without a shelter" Stoick said, and opened the storage room. He tossed several thick furs onto the table, "use these instead, when spring comes, you can trade them for coin to buy lighter gear, if they aren't in bad condition. Did you pack some food, water?"

"Yes," Hiccup said, "I also have my tool set from Gobber's incase I need to repair anything."

"If you ever need coin, your blacksmith training is probably the best thing to fall back on," Stoick said, "blacksmiths are nearly always looking for hands, especially experienced ones. How much food did you pack?"

"Toothless and I can catch fish easily," Hiccup said, "the lighter I travel, the better. So I just have some fruit-"

"Take crackers and salted meat," Stoick said, waving his hand over to the cooking area, "You can't live on fish and fruit alone. Take some salt as well, I'll get more tomorrow. You have your sword, and here's some string and a need. It never hurts to have those on hand."

Hiccup took the items, and packed them into his bag beside the salt and spice jars, with the thicker furs and his spare clothes the bag was almost full, "Is that it?"

"How much money do you have?" Stoick asked, and Hiccup blinked.

Berk was a small village; almost everything was either traded, or added to the general village supply. They had the typical bullion system, but Hiccup hadn't ever had to use it before.

"I have some coins," he said, frowning, he hadn't thought of money, "maybe two or three copper pieces?"

"Here," Stoick said, and turned around, messing with something by his bed stand. When he turned around he had a small purse in his hand, he gave it to Hiccup.

"This is silver," Hiccup said, astonished to find the round shaped coins, alongside some gold ones inside the small bag.

"Aye, put that around your neck, and don't ever hang it on your belt, that makes you a target to petty thieves."

"I can't take this," Hiccup said nervously, holding out the bag, "its town money isn't it?"**

Stoick laughed, throwing his head back. The reaction just made Hiccup feel more uncomfortable.

"Son, I know it may not seem like it, but the Haddock family had been one of the more prominent families since the Harry Hooligans were founded," Stoick said, after he had stopped laughing, "that," Stoick said, indicating the bag, "is only a small portion of our family's fortune."

"Oh," Hiccup said, feeling rather stupid now, he looked down at the coins, they were round with the tribe emblem stamped into them, "I didn't realizeâ€|"

"That's a good thing," Stoick said, pointing at him, "I raised you the way my father raised me. If I wanted something, I had to earn it myself. If I want something, I work toward it. Even today. Because wealth isn't what's in your pocket, it's in your life. Here on such a small island wealth doesn't mean much, but you there you'll need money for supplies and emergencies. Every coin is exactly a gram. So don't worry about scales."

"I see. Thank you," Hiccup said, tying the leather string around his neck, and slipping the leather bag underneath his shirt.

There was a knock from the front door, making both of them look up.

"Are you two arguing again?" Gobber asked, stepping into the house.

"No," Stoick said after a pause, "is something the matter?"

"Yeah," Gobber said, "everyone is waiting to start the return party, and you aren't there," he said, "is something the matter here?"

Stoick and Hiccup shared a look, "We're just about finished. I'll be up in the hall soon, go ahead and start without me."

Gobber narrowed his eyes, looking between the father and son. His gaze drifted to the bag on the table "What's going on Stoick?"

"I'm leaving," Hiccup said, before his father could say anything. Stoick glared at him, "what? He's going to find out when I don't show up for training tomorrow, everyone's going to know by tomorrow evening."

_Perhaps earlier, depending on how soon people realize the dragons are missing, _Hiccup thought, nervously.

Gobber stepped in, closing the door behind him, and crossing his arms, "Explain."

Stoick nodded, and Hiccup turned to Gobber "I've been cursed. I'm going to find a cure."

The blond raised his eyebrows, and he turned to Stoick, who placed his hands on his hips, "Gothi's given her blessing. He's headed out tonight."

"Why are you just telling me this now?" Gobber asked Hiccup, and Hiccup felt guilty for not telling him.

"We were hoping I would be here for a while longer," Hiccup said, "but it doesn't look like I will be. Sorry, I should have told you."

"It was the Nightfury, wasn't it?" Gobber said, his eyes widening, and Stoick and Hiccup looked at each other, surprised. "It cursed you, didn't it?"

"Not quite," Stoick said stiffly, "Freda warned me this could happen when he was born. But Val and I didn't think it would actually happen. We were fools."

"It would be better to tell everyone it was the Nightfury," Gobber said, shaking his head, "that way other people won't start thinking they're cursed 'cause they were born in winter. You know how sensitive these things are."

"I know," Stoick sighed, "Hiccup, I'm going to have to lie to people about why you're leaving. Do you understand?"

"A little, yeah."

"You'll understand one day," Gobber said, "just repeat what Stoick says and you'll be fine. Come on then, let's get going." He turned and opened the door.

"Leave your bag here, you can get it later," Stoick said, placing a hand on Hiccup's shoulder, and once Gobber was out of ear shot he continued "sorry, but your new friend is about to become a scapegoat."

"Where are we going?" Hiccup asked, worriedly, not quite liking how things were going.

"To your farewell party, where else?" Stoick laughed, but his eyes were sad, "Come on, Son," he patted him on the shoulder, and followed Gobber up to the great hall.

* * *

><p>AN:**

***Vikings had a bullion economy, meaning that currency was often based off precious metals, usually silver.**

****A small town like Berk probably had all its currency centralized at the head of the village. Stoick, as chief, would buy things for the town, which would be earned from the town's profits.**

13. Farewells and Traditions

A/N: I do not own HTTYD or any of it's characters

Special thanks to HurryPollo for editing

Reviews appreciated

****Updates are Thursday evening or Friday mornings.****

* * *

<p>Ch. 13: Farewells and Traditions<p>

"I'm here, I'm here. It's not like you guys haven't started without me," Stoick said, walking into the side door of the hall, all the bustling adults in the hall burst into laughter before falling quiet. They really had started without him, breaking out the mead and food. Gobber and Hiccup entered quietly behind him, not wanting to draw attention away from the chief.

"As all of you know already," Stoick said light heartily, his voice carrying over the crowd easily, "we did not find the nest as planned. However, no one died this time, so I guess we're getting marginally better. All except Sven of course, you need to work on your aim son, you wrangled more rocks than dragons."

The crowd chuckled heartily, and Stoick continued, going serious, "and I have more news."

"The rumor that my son, Hiccup, managed to shoot down the infamous Nightfury is true," a wave of gasps went through the crowd, as well as muttering. Stoick continued, and people shushed those that were muttering, "Foot prints, as well as scales were found at the sight of the crash. My son was found collapsed, and the Nightfury was nowhere to be seen. We left the day after, but I left my third, Gobber, to investigate what had happened. That's why I'm late tonight," Stoick paused, taking a deep breath, and Hiccup could see the uneasiness sweep through the crowd, as well as several eyes looking at him curiously, "forgive me, this is hard for me to announce as chief, as well as a father," Stoick said, "it has been confirmed that the Nightfury has placed a curse on Hiccup."

There were several gasps throughout the crowd, as well as worried murmuring. Hiccup felt his fists tighten. So this is what Stoick had meant by scapegoat. He felt a hand on his right shoulder, and turned to find Gobber looking at him seriously, "Trust us, this is the best way," he said quietly, "Just play along, you'll understand one day." Hiccup directed his attention back to the stage, not giving Gobber a response. Just because he didn't understand, didn't mean he would have to like it.

"GOTHI HAS ASSURED ME," Stoick boomed, quieting the room, "that the curse only affects Hiccup himself. And it is with great sadness in my heart, that I announce his departure."

Stoick turned and gestured to Hiccup, who froze. His alight anger immediately jolting into fear. His father said nothing about him speaking.

Gobber pushed him forward, and Hiccup nearly tripped into his dad, who steadied him. He was righted, and placed in front of Stoick, center stage. The gaze of the entire village on him, "H-hey. Hi," Hiccup said nervously, clutching his hands together, and looking out at the sea of people. They all looked at him and Hiccup froze. There were so many people. He stood like a deer in headlights.

A movement caught his eye, toward the back. It was Astrid, sitting confidently on the teen's table to see over the crowd. They made eye contact, and she gave him a thumbs up, and an encouraging nod. The sight of her gave him a familiar ground, he took a deep breath and began, rubbing the back of his neck nervously, "I knowâ€¦ that I'm not exactly the best child in the village. I mean if anyone deserves to be named Hiccup, it's me," he began nervously, feeling himself starting to sweat. Astrid motioned for him to go on, as well as a verbal message for him to raise his chin. Hiccup did so, and continued.

"And I'll be the first to admit that it was a mistake to shoot the Nightfury down because it was," he said, looking over the sea of people, "Since when did this many people live on Berk? "It certainly isn't a dragon you want to mess withâ€¦ and wellâ€¦ let me be an example for any of you looking to hunt it down. Itsâ€¦ hard to explain. I'm headed out so that I can find a way toâ€¦ atone for what I've done." Hiccup shifted his weight nervously, speaking a little faster, "Gothi has given me a good lead, but we don't know if it will lift the curseâ€¦ I don't know when I'll be back, so I just want to say, I'm sorry, for well, for everything. I'm glad to hear you've all come back, and I wish myâ€¦ eh, friends luck in the dragon competition. Goodbye everyone," Hiccup finished quickly. He looked turned around Nervously when his father stepped up to his side. Hiccup immediately shuffled back behind him, trying to remember what he had just said, he was too nervous to remember.

"Right then," Stoick said, stepping forward, and only maybe half the hall's attention turned to the chief, "tonight we celebrate not only our return, but also Hiccup leaving on his first quest. This is a time for celebration! Bring out the ale that already hasn't!" The town cheered, and movement began again, people breaking off into conversations, or dancing to the music.

"Not a bad job," Gobber said, as Hiccup shakily stepped off the speaking platform.

"That was horrible," Hiccup said, realizing his hands were still shaking.

"You did better than Stoick did the first time he spoke to the entire town," Gobber chuckled, indicating the chief, who was talking with his uncle, Spitelout, "the first time his father had him address the village, he threw up." He whispered behind his mechanical hand.

"No," Hiccup said in disbelief. The blond man nodded, then swept Hiccup up into a bone crushing hug, "I'm gonna miss you Hiccup,"

"Gobber I can't breathe," Hiccup wheezed, and the blacksmith dropped him, steadying him when he nearly fell over.

"Watch it," Gobber chuckled, "people might start thinking you're the one with the missing leg." The blond put a hand on each of Hiccup's shoulders, and smiled earnestly, "but in all seriousness. Be safe out there. It's a big world, never forget where you started. It makes you who you are."

"I will, thank you for everything Gobber," he promised.

"I'm going to go get something to drink now, and let you go off to your friends," Gobber said, "don't forget to say goodbye to your father before you leave. Oh, and if you can, bring me back some new forging techniques or something, yeah?"

"I will," Hiccup said, as Gobber walked off. He went to find Astrid and Fishlegs, basically his only two friends, but was stopped by every person he passed. They all expressed their sorrow, and wished him good luck.

Hiccup eventually made it over to the teen's usual table, though.

"You're cursed?!" Ruffnut accused, "And you didn't tell us?!"

"Think of all the ironic jokes we didn't get to make," Tuffnut said, crying into his sister's shoulder.

"Yeah, why didn't you tell me?" Fishlegs asked, and Hiccup felt guilty.

"Gothi and Dad didn't want me to tell anyone, not until we were sure I had to leave. I did leave some pages, with everything I remembered about the Nightfury in a package for you though. Dad will probably give it to you tomorrow," Hiccup said, thinking of the farewell letters he had written that were upstairs in his room.

"You know what this means, right?" Snotlout said excitedly, "This means I'm next in line to be chief! All you guys will have to listen to me from now on."

"That's only if Hiccup can't cure the curse," Astrid scoffed, putting her cup down, "and you have a lot of work to do if you want people to start following you."

"I'm a natural leader," Snotlout shook his head, "I'm just perfect that way."

"I'd rather follow Fishlegs than follow you," Tuffnut said, "you got me nearly killed yesterday."

"It was all part of the plan, I was counting on Astrid to save you," Snotlout rolled his eyes, and inspected his nails dramatically, "it's not something a peasant like you would understand."

The two started arguing with each other, and the others tuned it out.

"So where are you going?" Ruffnut asked.

"South, toward the Berserker Tribe," Hiccup said, "Gothi told me what I needed was around there, if I don't find it there I'll be headed to the mainland, I guess."

"That's a lot of sailing," Fishlegs frowned, "all by yourself? Are you going to be okay?"

"Oh! Are you looking for a crew to go to the mainland with?" Tuffnut said, from the headlock Snotlout had him in, "I volunteer, I've

always wanted to be a pirate."

"Take him with you, that way I can finally get some shuteye," Ruffnut pleaded, but he could tell her heart wasn't in it.

"No, I'll be going by myself. But thanks for the offer." Hiccup said.

"You're really leaving, aren't you?" Fishlegs said, looking sad, "I feel like my childhood just ended. Like one of us is going off on a quest and probably never coming back."

"I thought we became adults when dragon training ended," Tuffnut said, looking at the larger boy confused, "it was happening anyway. how did you not see it?"

"I'll miss you to Fishlegs," Hiccup said, ignoring Tuffnut, "I'll miss all of you guys. I'll send a letter via trader when I get to the Berserker Island, and if I don't find what I'm looking for in the south, I'll come back up North."

"Why?" Snotlout asked, and Astrid gave him a flat look, "What? With him gone it's a strait shot to chieftom for me. Though now that I think about it, kinda always has been."

"Right," Hiccup rolled his eyes, and then stood up, "well I've got to go say farewell to the others, then I'll head off to bed, I've got to rest up for tomorrow."

"Goodbye Hiccup," Fishlegs sniffed, giving him a hug nearly as bone crushing as Gobber's had been.

"See you, hopefully," Ruffnut was next, giving him a hug as well.

"Travel safely," Astrid said, placing a hand on his arm, she looked like she was about to say something, but the others cut in.

Hiccup was nearly tackled by Tuffnut "Why does it always have to be the normal ones who leave?" he whined, "Now all we have left is Astrid!"

"Hey!" Snotlout said, hitting the blond's helmet and shoving him off. Snotlout stepped up to Hiccup, looking serious.

"You'll be back," the black haired boy said, holding out his hand. Hiccup immediately recognized the traditional farewell for the Haddock family, well traditional since his parents. He was surprised Snotlout knew it.

"Maybe," Hiccup promised, taking his arm, "and you'll be here?"

"Definitely," Snotlout nodded, shaking his arm roughly, before letting go, "I'll make sure to kill the Monstrous Nightmare in your honor." Snotlout claimed, switching back to his usual annoying self.

"Eh, thanks," Hiccup said, giving one last farewell before leaving.

Hiccup went around and said goodbye to several of the other villagers, particularly Betty the Blade, who told him to keep up his training, and gave him a book with several simple sword fighting techniques inside.

Astrid found him in the crowd later, pulling him aside.

"So you really weren't lying after all," Astrid said, "Truth be told I kinda wished a little that you had been lying."

"It all seems so surreal, I don't blame you," hiccup admitted, sitting down on the bench surrounding one of the large torches in the room.

Astrid sat down beside him, "So you're really going to see her, the Dragon Queen?"

"The Dragons from the ring say that she can help me," Hiccup said honestly, bending forward to rest his elbows on his knees, "I know its treachery, going to the enemy and begging for help- but all I really want to do is stay human. Is that so bad?"

"If you ever do become a monster, find me. I'll kill you." Astrid said, and Hiccup did a double take when he saw how serious her expression was, "it's the least I can do."

"Eh, Thanks," Hiccup sat up nervously, not really sure how to interpret the promise he had just made.

"It's weird," Astrid said, moving on, "All my life I thought you could never take anything seriously. Not your work at your forge, the responsibilities or being Stoick's son. I just saw the result of everything, and thought that you were a fool that liked to mess things up. That you didn't put all of your effort into things." She paused, watching the people dance quietly, "But now that I finally took the time to actually pay attention, the time to get to know you- I realized that you were putting out more effort than anyone." She snorted, smiling a bit, "Ruffnut's always right."

"What?" Hiccup asked, raising an eyebrow.

"Yeah, Ruffnut. She's a lot more perceptive than people give her credit for. It's a saying she came up with when we were kids. Kind of means 'I told you so' in a way." Astrid explained a small smile on her face. The smile fell though as she took a small pause and continued, "Every time someone would be complaining about your latest 'hiccup' she would make this face and shake her head. One day I asked her why she did that," Astrid shifted, crossing her legs and looking over at him, "you want to know what she said?"

"What?" Hiccup asked, frowning.

"But what if it had worked," Ruffnut said, making Hiccup jump slightly. The blond had snuck up on him while his attention had been on the conversation. Astrid seemed unfazed by the other blonde's sudden appearance. The blond looked bored as she sat beside Astrid, slouching down on the bench, "Guess one of them finally did work out though, huh. What did I tell you?" she said, poking Astrid on her arm.

"Ruffnut's always right," the two girls repeated together before chucking slightly.

"So what are you two sitting over here for, being all broody-moody?" Ruffnut asked.

"I was kinda in on the whole 'Hiccup leaving'" Astrid admitted, "I might have cornered him in the woods and demanded the answer."

"You didn't demand it, I answered you the first time you asked," Hiccup said rolling his eyes, honestly why did all the teenagers on this island have to be so dramatic.

"Oh, so that's the thing you've been hiding from me," Ruffnut said smiling, evilly, "you know she wouldn't even tell me after I tickle attacked her?"

"I am not ticklish," Astrid said her face turning pink, but still looking dignified "I don't know what you're talking about."

"Oh, you aren't?" Ruffnut's face split into an evil grin. Her hand darted forward, and Astrid let out a loud squeak, dodging around Hiccup, sitting on his other side. Literally shoving him into Ruffnut with her foot.

"Don't do that!" she said, face red, as Ruffnut laughed evilly.

"Works every time," Ruffnut said, as Hiccup sat up straight again, watching the two interact almost as if from afar. _So this is what best friends are like_, He realized sadly, not really listening as the two girls bickered around him.

"Hey man, what's with the glum face?" Ruffnut asked, bringing Hiccup out of his thoughts.

"Oh, just had a thought," Hiccup said, and stood up, "I really should go off to find my dad."

"Yeah, I guess so" Astrid said, looking up at him, she held out an arm, "I'm sorry, I should have given you a chance sooner. But you're a friend, so stay in touch, okay?"

"I'll do what I can," Hiccup said, gripping her arm, "Thanks again Astrid."

"Come back okay?" Ruffnut said, standing up and giving him a hug, "I don't want to be stuck with Astrid as the only normal person."

"I'll try," Hiccup promised, "Stay warm this winter," he said, and left the two girls.

He found his father talking to Spitelout and some of the other men. Stoick lead him outside to talk with him in private.

"I've always know this day was coming," Stoick said sadly, "I just wish it had come later, when you were more trained."

"I'll talk to Oswald and see if I can get some training in over the

winter. If anything Dagur will be happy to do so. I'll send a letter through Trader Johann about my arrival."

Stoick nodded, then his chief face crumbled into the awkward dad Hiccup knew him as, "I have something for you, to keep you safe," he said, and produced a Viking helmet, with large yak horns.

He handed the helmet to him, and Hiccup took it, looking at the metal work, "Wow, thanks."

"Your mother would have wanted you to have it, its half her breast plate, matching set," Stoick said, tapping his own helmet, while Hiccup looked at the object in his hands awkwardly, "keeps her close, you know?"

"Wear it proudly, you deserve it."

"Wow, right," Hiccup said, "Thanks a lot Dad, I'm going to miss you."

"I'm going to miss you too, Son," Stoick said, looking proud.

Hiccup tucked the helmet under his arm, and took a deep breath.

"I'll be back," Hiccup said, sounding more confident than he thought possible.

Repeating the words his mother and father always exchanged when she went out on adventures, leaving Stoick behind. Never once in his life did he think he would be saying this to his father.

"And I'll be here," Stoick said, standing up, and adjusting his own helmet, "I love you Son, Odin see you."

The two paused for a moment, letting the moment sink in, and then went their separate ways.

14. Jailbreak

A/N: I do not own HTTYD or any of its character.

Special thanks to HurryPollo for editing.

Reviews appreciated.

* * *

><p>Ch. 14: Jailbreak<p>

_What took you so long? _The Gronckle asked, as Hiccup approached the ring quietly. The party was going full swing in the great hall, and everyone but Hiccup was in there, drinking ale and swapping stories.

"Sorry, I had to say goodbye to my father, and get some things," Hiccup whispered, hoping the Gronckle could hear him. He set down his travel bag, and opened the gate to the arena as quietly as he could, as well as the secondary gate.

_The Nightfury came by hours ago, to give us the signal, _the Zibbleback said groggily, _we were starting to think you'd been caught and burned alive._

"Why would they burn me alive?" Hiccup asked, throwing up the levers to the Gronckle's and Nadder's cages, thanking Gobber silently for oiling the mechanism. The man hated the sound of screeching metal as much as he hated taking a bath.

_It doesn't hurt to hope. _

"You know, I could just leave you," Hiccup hissed as the two headed beast walked out of its cage.

He left the cage doors open, as well as the arena's, and followed the dragons out, grabbing his bag on the way. He checked to make sure there wasn't anything incriminating in the ring, and then turned to the dragons. With luck most of the villagers would think that a drunkard released the dragons, though he doubted that would happen.

"Alright," Hiccup whispered, turning to the five (six if he counted the Zibbleback as two separate entities) dragons, "you guys are free to do whatever you want. Me and Tooth- the Nightfury are going to head out to meet the Queen tonight. If you want to fly with us, meet us over by that cliff, if not, well, have at it," Hiccup said, then threw his bag over his shoulder.

_Thank you human, _The Gronckle said, _I for one will be traveling with you, I'll meet you later._

_Yeah, I'll be going as well. _The Nadder said, cocking its head to one side.

I don't have anything better to do. The Monstrous Nightmare said, giving the dragon equivalent of a shrug.

_Don't count us out either! _The Zibbleback heads said in unison.

"You're all coming with us?" Hiccup said, not sure how to feel, "Alright then, I'll see you later. I guess."

The dragons and he all said their farewells, and Hiccup made his way into the forest to meet up with Toothless.

He found the dragon sitting in the same place he had been knocked down not two weeks ago.

Funny how time went, it almost felt like a year ago to him.

"All the others are meeting up by the cliff face," Hiccup said, attaching the bag onto the saddle, and pulling himself up.

Toothless flicked his ears fins in surprise, _I wonder why they all decided to come? _

"Beats me, maybe they're just returning to their Queen?"

I get the funny feeling that they aren't. Nice hat by the way.

"Thanks, it was a gift, let's get going," Hiccup said, unfurling the tail fin.

The two flew up into the night sky to meet up with the other dragons.

The two Zippleback's were arguing about directions, while the Nadder and the Gronckle seemed to just enjoy being able to fly freely again.

"Where's the Monstrous Nightmare?" Hiccup asked as they glided up, the only thing visible in the darkness were the dragons' eyes.

_He wanted to eat something before we left _The Gronckle said.

Hiccup glanced over at the town immediately.

_Don't worry human, I just went and caught some fish, _the deep voice of the Monstrous Nightmare said, flying up, _ I'm not stupid enough to get caught again._

"Right, we're all here," Hiccup said, "let's get going," he turned sharply in his saddle to the Zippleback, "you two, stop arguing will you? Just follow us. You're just as bad a Ruff and Tuff, I swear."

_Who are they? _One of the heads asked as the group set off.

"The two trainees with the really long, blond hair."

_I liked them, _the other head said happily.

Hiccup didn't comment on that, and focused on staying in tune with Toothless. He couldn't see at all this late into the night, and had to rely on his connection with the dragon to know how to fly.

The group flew in general silence, the Nadder humming one of her tunes as they went. The entire air was filled with a general high spirit feeling, radiating from the newly freed dragons.

Hiccup, however, was filled with fear and dread.

Anxiety of what the future might hold.

Fear of not being able to stop the transformation.

The Dread of meeting the Dragon Queen.

However, as afraid as Hiccup was, he knew he was on the right path.

He was rising to meet his destiny.

It would be a long, arduous journey.

This was only the first step.

* * *

><p>AN: We've officially made it to the end of part one!
Hurray!

This story is LONG, as I have warned you before, and i'm going to break it up into parts. This chapter concludes the first part, Tales of Berk. The second part will be posted next Thursday/Friday per the usual but as a separate story, titled Tales of the Berserker Isle, by me of coarse :D

I want to give some special thanks to some people before we move on to the next section.

First, of coarse, is HurryPollo,

She motivated me not only to write and publish this story, but has also edited all of the chapters, helped me develop the story, make the cover art, suffered through all night sessions of plot talk, and dealt with me rambling on about a million things in general. She's been a real driving force behind this whole story and if you guys get the chance, send her a PM to thank her. Because she deserves a lot of credit for making this story.

Second, Denis.d2505;

He's only reviewed twice, but following the first post we had a long discussion that really made me thankful for how awesome people in the HTTYD fandom can be. The second post actually pointed out a small plot hole, and made me go back and look over the second part, inspiring a whole rewrite of the second part, and the small scene with Astrid and Ruffnut in the previous chapter. I'm looking forward to hearing more of your story ideas, if you'll share them, and I wish you good luck with your own writing.

Third, K-chan's Kisses;

For reviewing on EVERY chapter that one day as you read them. You have no idea what it felt like to check my email that one day and have 11 reviews sitting in my inbox. Me and HurryPollo literally had a freak attack when we saw them, we didn't know what to do. I don't remember if you replied back to me, but thanks all the same.

Thanks of coarse to everyone else who reviewed! and to all you silent folk that didn't. At the posting of this chapter there are 96 followers; a number that is way more than I ever thought I would get for this story. (like seriously my expectation was 10 followers- you guys are awesome)

It was wonderful sharing this part with all of you, i'll see you next week in the second part:Tales of the Berserker Isle

-darkmickyangel

15. End Note

Dear Readers,

The next part of this story, titled Tales of the Berserker Isle is now up!

It picks up right where this one left off- updates will be Thursday/Friday per the norm.

Hope to see you all there,

Darkmickyangel

End
file.